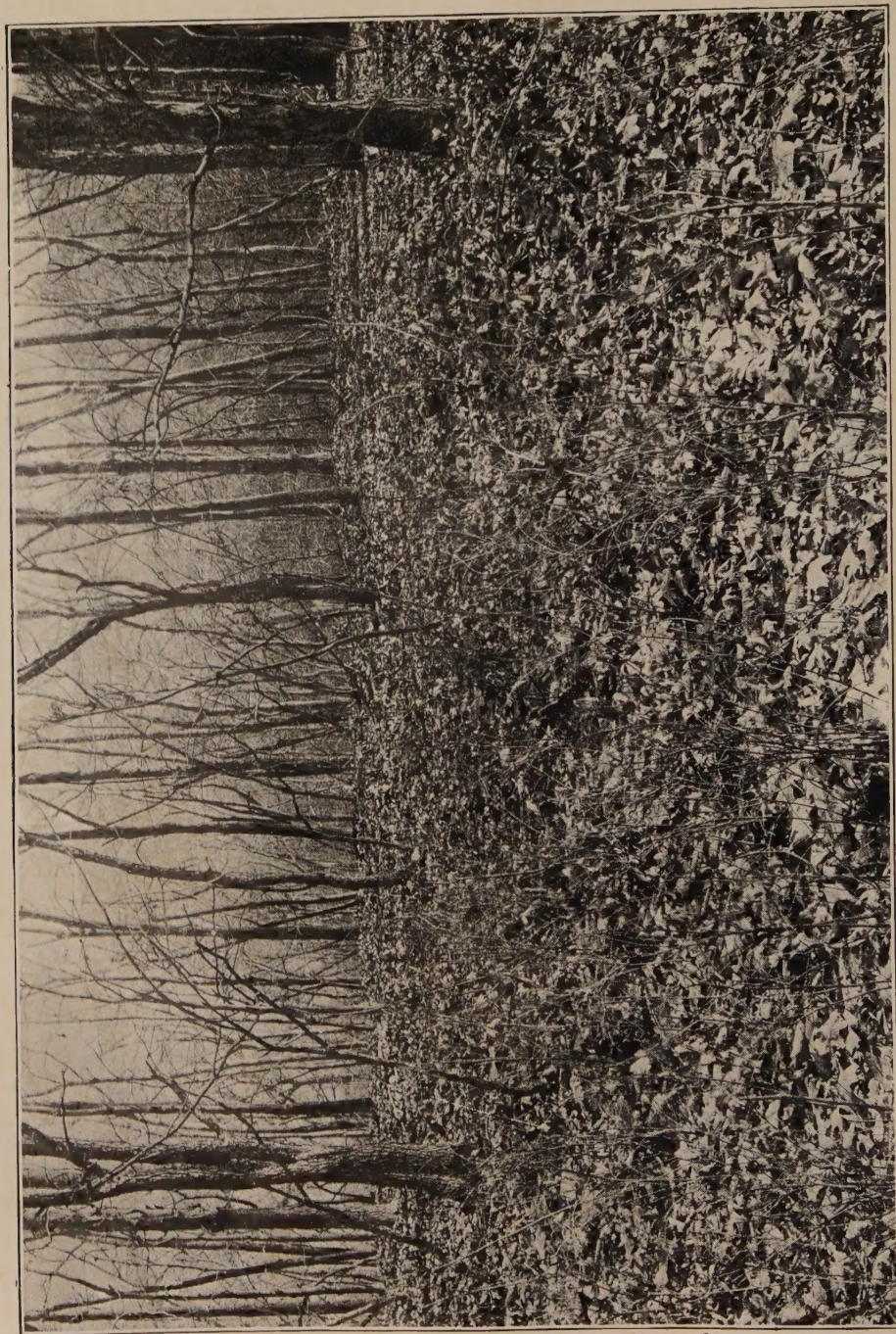


IN GOD'S OUT-OF-DOORS



WILLIAM-A-QUAYLE

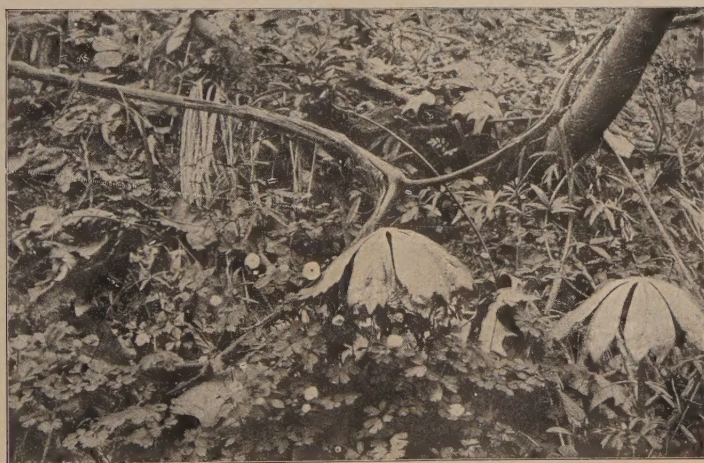
IN GOD'S OUT-OF-DOORS



AUTUMN LEAVES

IN GOD'S OUT-OF-DOORS

WILLIAM A. QUAYLE



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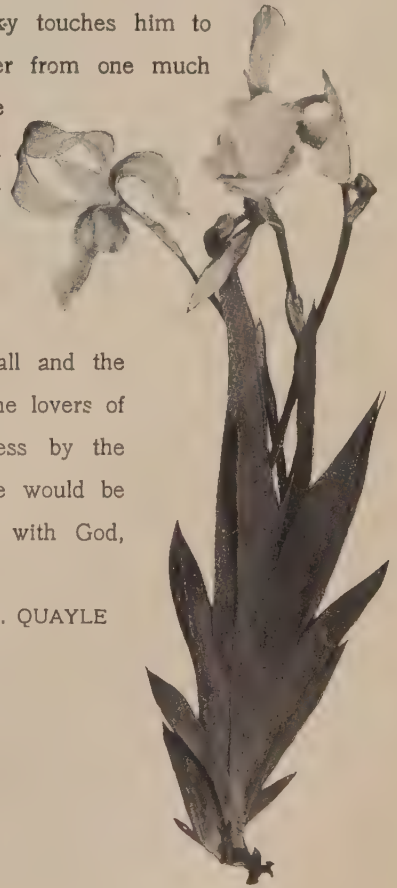
PRELUDE



FRANKLY, little is to be anticipated from the Author of this book. He is far from being a specialist. He is not entomologist nor botanist nor ornithologist. He confesses to knowing which end of a flower the root grows on and but little more.

He purposes writing because he loves God's Out-of-Doors. The blue sky touches him to sadness, like reading a letter from one much loved and long dead; and the shadows in quiet water affect him like a prayer. The author's wish is to people other hearts with love of flower and woodland path and drifting cloud and dimming light and moonlit distance and starlight and voices of bird and wind and cadence of the rainfall and the storm, and to make men and women more the lovers of this bewildering world fashioned in loveliness by the artist hand of God. And beyond all this, he would be glad to bring them into fellowship and love with God, which is the poesy and eloquence of life.

WILLIAM A. QUAYLE



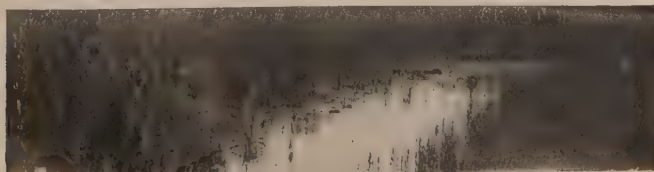
The photographs interpretive of Nature in this book are by Mr. George N. Jennings, Mrs. Jacoby, Mr. J. F. Earhart, Mr. Wm. Simpkinson, Mr. Roy Holtz, Mr. Charles C. Woods, Mr. Charles Schurman, and Mr. Lare; but the great majority are by Dr. Charles S. Parmenter; while the drawings are by Margaret Robbins.



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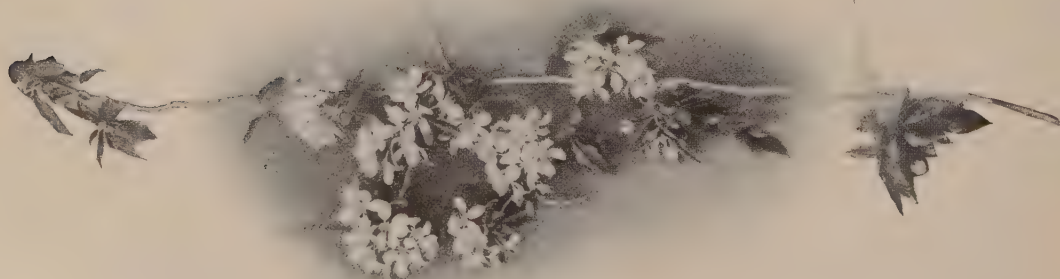




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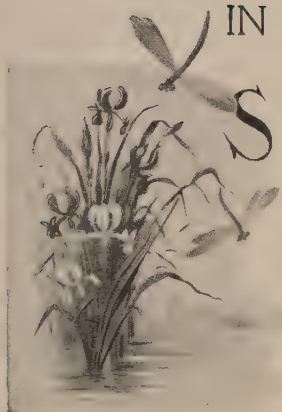
IN GOD'S OUT-OF-DOORS





SUNSET

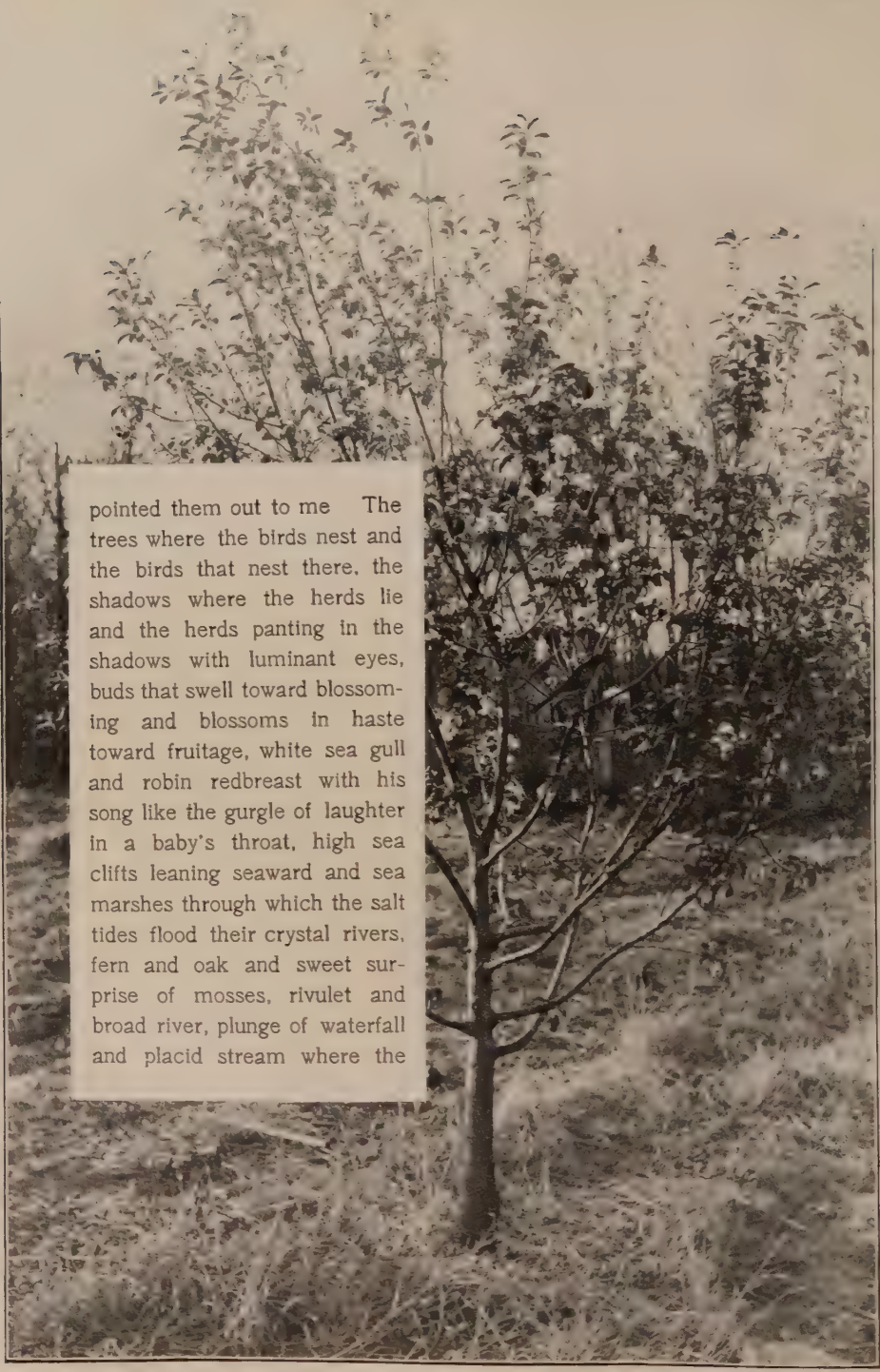
IN GOD'S OUT-OF-DOORS



SOME people do not well know that God is out-of-doors. I marvel at them. He is everywhere—"though I take the wings of the morning"—but so God is in dusks and dawns and twilights and noons, in doors and out, at toil and on holidays, where deserts keep tryst with the moonlight, and where the wide sea can behold no shore—God is always wherever I have gone. He is in the little room where a baby learns its prayer from mother lips, kneeling, and with fingers interlaced (God loves a sight like this), and in the church where congregations meet to wait on the

Lord, and "worship in the beauty of holiness," and where in God's acre we bury our beloved out of the sight of our eyes dimmed with weeping—God is there; but he is also out where he has planted the wind flowers, and where the hawthorn stoops beneath its drifted snows fresh fallen, and where sweet eglantine blooms and the fringed gentian, and where the Indian pipe grows in the dusk of quiet woods, and where the maple flushes a little in the early spring and sows the ground beneath, where its shadows will soon shut sunlight out, with its own pink blossoms, and where the sycamore stands in winter with its yellow apples like a jest of harvest for a tree so bulky, or where dodder plant, yellow as gold, steals saps from other plants to feed its splendors on, and where the sea-fowls float like a ghost of voices through the night skies, heard but unseen,—God is out-of-doors also God is everywhere.

He made the Out-of-doors and loves it, and haunts it, as Jesus did the mountain and the sea. "Behold the lilies how they grow," He said whose name is sweet; and so I will heed them; and, He said, "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing?" True, sparrows are very plentiful and bickering, but I will look at them, for He made them and



pointed them out to me The trees where the birds nest and the birds that nest there, the shadows where the herds lie and the herds panting in the shadows with luminant eyes, buds that swell toward blossoming and blossoms in haste toward fruitage, white sea gull and robin redbreast with his song like the gurgle of laughter in a baby's throat, high sea cliffs leaning seaward and sea marshes through which the salt tides flood their crystal rivers, fern and oak and sweet surprise of mosses, rivulet and broad river, plunge of waterfall and placid stream where the

A ROBIN REDBREAST IN HIS FAVORITE HAUNT—AN APPLE-TREE

current is asleep, russet grove of scrub oak on winter hills, and the vivid greens of willows in fresh leaf in early springtime,—I will behold “them all.” They belong in God’s Out-of-doors; and God is out there looking his premises over. And if he will let me I will go with him. And as I look his way to ask him if I may go, he looking my way, before I say a word, says, “Come, let us go into my Out-of-doors;” and I *am going* with HIM into God’s Out-of-doors.



WHERE WIND FLOWERS BLOOM

ON SEEING





THE HAWTHORN WITH ITS BLOOM OF SNOW

ON SEEING



I WOULD reverently add to the list of the beatitudes this, "Blessed are those who help us to see." From my heart I bless such men and women. All the good must pray to God, "Help us to see." The pity of this world is not its limitations, but ours. Into the earth as into a king's golden goblet, God has poured all things which minister to an immortal and growing life. He has made a world pregnant with ideas. Vistas open as through a sunrise world to wide meadow lands beyond, where are sunshine and flowers and birds swaying in the tall grasses and singing as they sway and flute notes of singing waters and odors of damp sod and blooming flowers, and a meadow lark's dulcet note and swaying shadows of the woods when rocked by south winds and billowy motion of the grass like some emerald sea with tide setting to shore. We are always on the way to God's open as we are always on our way to God if we would have it so. Nothing of God's perishes, but endures. We have not gotten to the end, seeing God is forever holding something back. We can not bankrupt his opportunities nor providences nor knowledge nor joy; and how good that is! Life is as a book whose best pages are as yet uncut, and a growing interest holds us, filling the mind as a flood tide the sinuous shore line.

Who knows what is hid under the open sky? Some birds build their nest in plain



sight, and so hide their summer's house. The very openness was a hiding process. And under the wide, high sky, where hang bird and star and flower, and tree-twigg with its bursting green,—under that open these beatitudes are hidden as ferns are hid under a sandstone ledge, deep in a wood and wet with a perpetual shower of dripping from the stony roof. So much to see, so little seen; that is our grief. How we have let summers waste! Sparrows are not less provident. Nature's bounty runs to waste, or, what is worse, runs to weed. And a poet thought of this



A WOODLAND POOL OF DOGTOOTH VIOLETS

(and, as for that, what have not the poets thought of? Some one of them has left a caress on every flower of the field as the winds do):

*"There are flowerets down in the valley low
And over the mountain side,
That were never praised by a human voice
Nor by human eye descried;
But sweet as the breath of the royal rose
Is the perfume they exhale;
And where they bloom and why they bloom
The good Lord knoweth well."*



ON AUTUMN HILLSIDES

How this waste shames us since men and women have eyes for seeing! They are not blind. It were a mercy if one did not see that he were blind, because the blind are not blameworthy for their lack of sight. Deserts are flowerless; but this habitable world is a tangle of beauties, like the interlacing of the sunshine and the shadows in a summer wood when sunlight rules the sky. A world full of loveliness, and we see it not! That sounds a requiem. "Having eyes, see not," is our pathos. That word haunts me as mourners haunt the grave of their dear dead. May not a prophet's prayer for his servant be a prayer uttered in our behalf as well? "I pray thee, open the young man's eyes that he may see." So many dusks and dawns nobody watches. I resent people running mad over carnivals and slighting the pageants of the morning and the night, worth a pilgrimage about our world to catch sight of once. One sunset in a decade; how thronged the way would be that led to its mountain! One in a week; who watches?



Pity the blind who, having eyes, see not. Edward Rowland Sill tells a benignant angel standing near,

"This is our earth—most friendly earth and fair;"

and he was right. His praise was scant, not profuse.

A mercy to the heart is the ubiquity of this loveliness. Some beauty abides everywhere. Deserts are flowerless; but night and moonlight on the far-stretching sands are so beautiful as fairly to stoop beneath their load. Beauty blooms unseen in shaded woodlands; in corn-rows; in field corners; on barbed wires, where wild vines tangle and blur the green of leaves with the surprise of flowers; on garbage heaps; among cinders; on rocky ledges; in quiet pools as lilies; in quiet skies as stars; purpling the hollows in remote mountains, and making the far hills blue as the far sea; voyaging as clouds; stationary as trees; wandering as a child with tangled hair and laughing face; vines visible, drooping over tumbling sheds or modest cottage or on stake-and-rider fences, shading windows of poverty; thrilling mornings with singing and soaring larks, and in

twilight with the vespers of the whip-poor-will; the plover's cry; a child's laughter and a child's face; a fair woman with her loveliest eyes; a boy with dirty and gleeful face; a leafless tree in a bare pasture; the distilled odors of night and dews,—so beauty blooms and such things are daily companionships; and we scarcely know that they are fair. What a world Ruskin found in "The Stones of Venice!" and what rarer world would God show every one of us if we would let him! Health to body and soul is in this out-of-doors. A walk through dewy fields is to pass into an enchanted land. Sometimes a friend says, "See, a falling star." We look and see no passing light, and he replies, "It has fallen." No brief flight of falling star is comparable for loveliness, though I love its light, with what we wade knee-deep in as grasses growing in ravines, and we have no thought for it. Nature as God left it is so much, has such a pensive delight, and serves as evangel of a gospel of contentment and peace. They are not poor who see. Riches unspeakable are theirs. I would for myself and for others pray, "Teach me to see lest I be poor beyond the depths of poverty." If I had might, as I would guide travelers to a mountain which swept eyes over a visionary scene, so would I guide to the vision of every day's delight.

To go abroad is not our need. To stay at home and have a variant world report to us as if we were emperors, that is traveledness. God will leave nothing wholly commonplace. He is against common things in that he exalts them into uncommon loveliness. A dead tree-trunk is overgrown with moss and vines; and tawny deserts have haunting distances and solitudes enthralling to imagination; the homeliest face has a radiant light upon it when love goes by its door with loitering steps; winter has hospitalities genial as those of summer. All the year is hospitable if we are neighborly.

*"Flower in the crannied wall,
I pluck you out of the crannies,"*

and hold you with a sense of joy not to be lightly told. Writing poetry is not our classic achievement after all. Seeing and feeling and being poetry is life's best work.

Come, for

*"The swan on still St. Mary's lake
Floats double, swan and shadow,"*

Lord, teach me to see!

WHEN SPRING COMES HOME



WHEN SPRING COMES HOME

When Spring comes home
From her long pilgrimage,
Unwearied, and unmarked by age,
When Spring comes home!—

How wild with glee
The laughing children and the flowers
And singing birds and golden hours,
And streams will be
When Spring comes home!

How the dull bank
Shall wake to smile with violets,
Forgetting Winter's sad regrets,
And joys, to thank
Sweet Spring come home!



*And down long hills
There babble like a happy child,
And swirl and leap with Springtime wild
The crystal rills,
Sweet Spring come home!*



*When Spring comes home!
How passing sweet it is to know
Our spirits like God's violets grow,
When Spring comes home!*



*And Spring comes home!
When life's long Winter faints and dies,
There dawns upon our watching eyes
Heaven's Spring come home.*

WINTER TREES





OAK

WINTER TREES



LEAFLESS trees are, in ordinary thinking, a synonym of desolation. They are nude, forlorn, forsaken, and are shivering through the winter as a beggar who thinks winter the necessary tribulation that preludes spring. I have not so learned the trees. Sympathy extended to them is, as I confidently believe, misapplied. Winter trees are not mendicants. The last thing they do is to ask alms. In them, as I have become acquainted with them, is a sturdy independence worthy of a Puritan colonist. These words of Marianne Farningham are part true, not wholly, though more nearly than the average estimate :

*"Poverty-stricken and gaunt they stand,
Dotted about o'er the hard brown land;
Stripped of their beauty they moan and sigh
To the pitiless breeze as it rushes by;
Leafless, forsaken, of song bereft,
They are like a life with no pleasure left;*

*Beautiful even though stripped and bare,
Are the trees that are planted everywhere;
Winter's best beauty belongs to them,
To their giant trunks and feathery stem,
And they bravely stand in the silent wood,
Like a patient life that is nobly good;"*

though I feel certain the trees will love her scarcely more because she wrote of them, unless they are touched, as all good lives should be, by thought given by the true hearts of women. Winter trees stand and endure—but they battle and enjoy and are beautiful as well. If I were

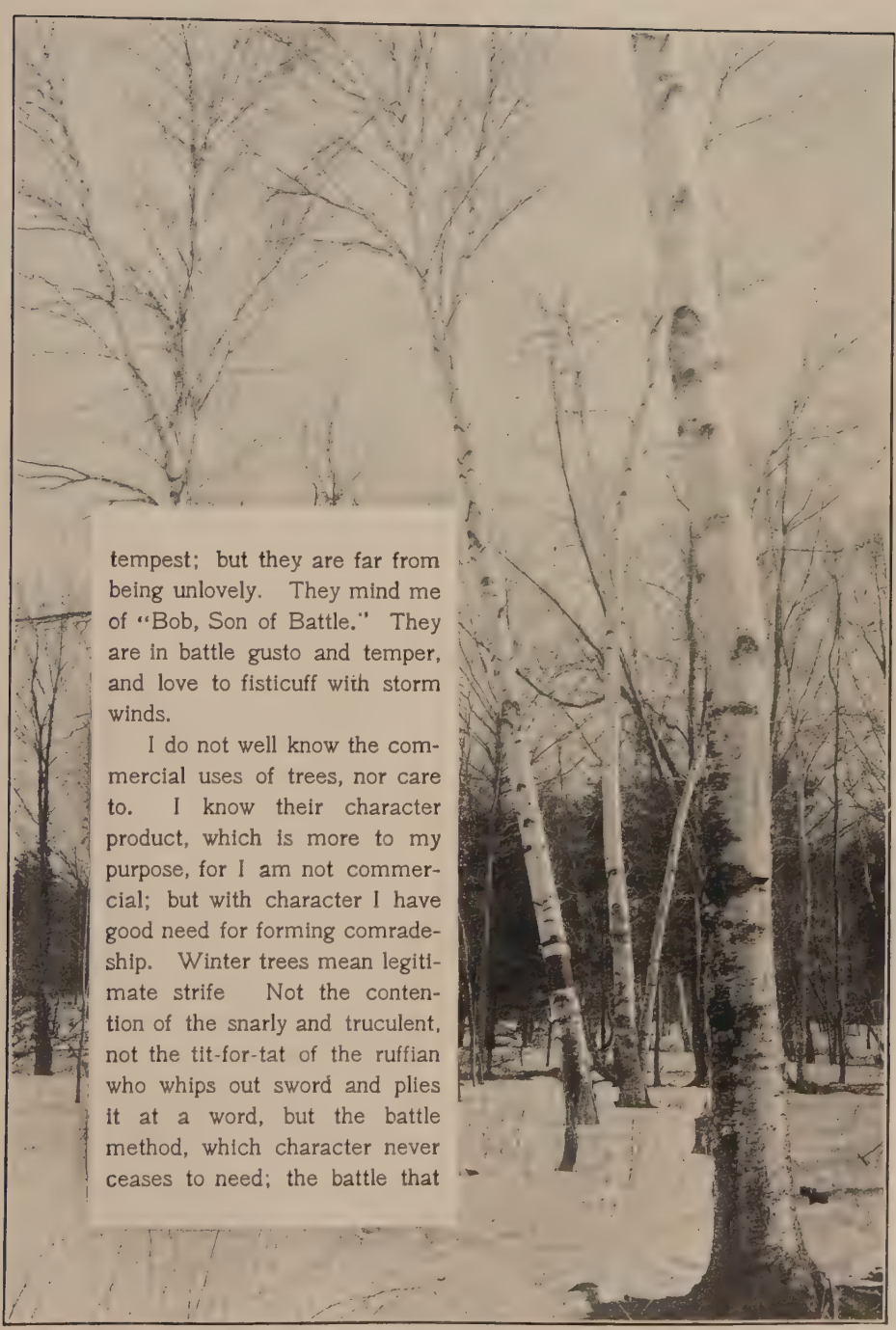
to choose between leafless trees and leafy trees, I confess not to be certain as to my choice, though I am sure the winter trees enjoy themselves not less than trees of summer time. To think that winter trees are forlorn and beautyless is common. They are to my belief warlike, strenuous, conquering, magnificent. Summer is the trees' furlough: winter is their campaign—one long battle both by night and day. Winter rules them and gives them a hundred giants' thews. They are as strong as Cæsar's soldiers and heroic as Mark Antony's veterans.

In winter the individuality of trees comes out. In summer their leaves are their chief circumstance and obscure their individuality. We can not get at a tree's shape in summer. It is shut in of its own leaves and shadow; but when winter, with icy sword blade, hacks away the last tatter of summer finery, and leaves the tree to stand, naked as an Indian warrior, then does it proclaim itself. To see the shadow cast upon the snow or brown leaves (snow is better for taking a tree's silhouette, and moonlight is better than sunlight), is to get acquainted with the tree. But by moonlight, on the snow, stand long and see the black and white picture of an elm-tree, or oak, or willow, or walnut, or sycamore. Pine and cedar take poor pictures so, because their foliage is perennial. To take a picture of a pine-tree always take it at noon against a sky of intense blue (than such sight there is no lovelier in heaven, especially if one could in the picture take the music winds and pines, twin minstrels, make). I love trees all the year through—in spring when their coy green is hinted at rather than come; in summer when they make dense shadow and one might sleep from sunrise until the night, nor have an intruding sunbeam peer into his face and make him turn like a sleeper in pain; in autumn, when summer greens are forgotten and trees are a sunset's splendor. I love this procession of changing charm and meaning, but confess to the heterodoxy of believing that winter trees are more beautiful to my eyes than those of spring, summer, or autumn.

Tree branches are works of God's art than which even that Chief Artist has done nothing lovelier, save only the face in child or woman. All this beauty is lost in summer, like a woman's face hid under a mourning veil. Than the tracery of elm twigs at the ends of curved branches nothing could be more poetical. Think it not strange that Turner and Ruskin should love trees to rapture; for in all the woods is not one positively ungraceful tree. The snarly gnarliness of certain oaks minds a man of how true might grows when whipped with furious



DESOLATE



tempest; but they are far from being unlovely. They mind me of "Bob, Son of Battle." They are in battle gusto and temper, and love to fisticuff with storm winds.

I do not well know the commercial uses of trees, nor care to. I know their character product, which is more to my purpose, for I am not commercial; but with character I have good need for forming comradeship. Winter trees mean legitimate strife. Not the contention of the snarly and truculent, not the tit-for-tat of the ruffian who whips out sword and plies it at a word, but the battle method, which character never ceases to need; the battle that

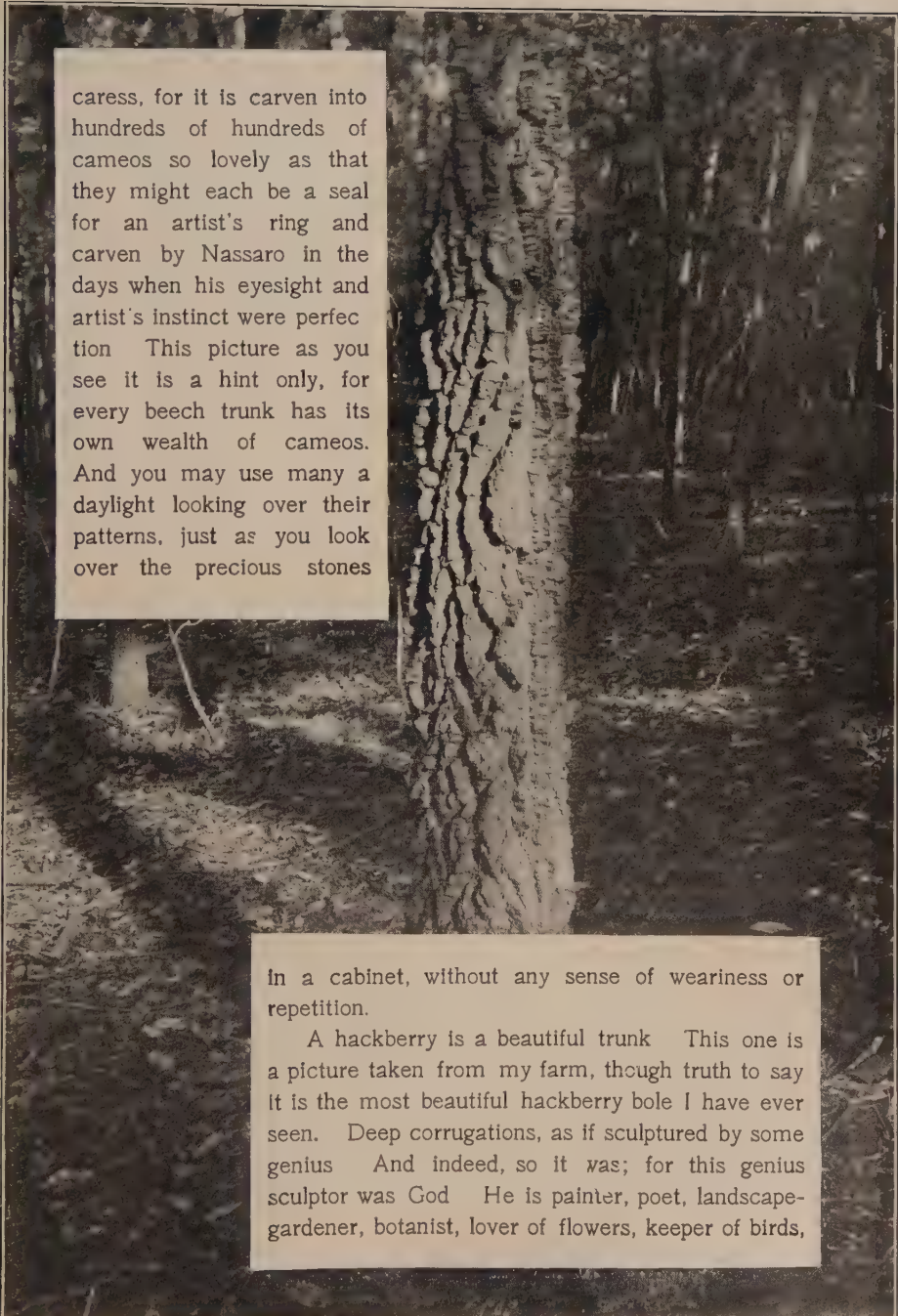
makes men and trees. War is an ingredient of souls, if souls are to come to manhood. Every winter tree is like a man on guard at a dangerous post. No wind goes by, however sedate and conciliatory, that the tree does not fling out naked arms of angry might before his face and cry surlily, "Halt, who goes there?" and then the battle is fierce as a Scotch clansman's onset. Winter trees make me proud of their grave and reasonable pugnacity.

In winter is the time when most people get acquainted, I think. The long evenings, and the shut-in firelight are conciliatory to friendship and made for confidences. So it is natural in winter to grow confidential with the trees. They then reveal their secret. Surly as they look, you will not find them so if you will be companionable. Then go out of town (trees stay in town because they are galley slaves chained there). Go into the empty forest where a river runs (if Providence favor you so highly), and spend a day there, building a fire on the sheltered side of some bank where the smoke curls on you, and the delicious odors of the wood exhale, and the flame dances in the twisting winds. Let the day be gray. Cloudy days are the appropriate days for making friendship with the trees. On open days the sky is too high, too illuminated, there is no background for the trees; and besides the sunlight makes shadow and gives wrong impression of twig, bark, and limb. The artists in their studios shut sunlight out. We who love the trees must be as wise as they. When the gray clouds are just above the tree tops, it is as if you looked at every tree against a background of gray granite. A tree has its chance to declare itself as in a confessional. There is no shadow; and no light flames with its torch to make wrong proportion, but it is as if twilight lit your lamp for you. On such a day, wander, lover-like, among the trees, and they will be confidential with you like women talking of their lovers. Give me a gray day with its all-day twilight, and the naked might of forest, and I will not envy kings their coronation.

A beech-tree is a picture. In the winter its sagging branches with their gray-brown leaves hanging shiveringly, so wizened and little, like a withered old man, and making their pitiful appeal as winds shiver by; and its trunk like a pillar of dusk to hold the porch of the evening up. Friend, if you do not know the beech-trees, you have one acquaintance-ship to contract which will do your life good. In autumn there is a harvest sunlight on the beech leaves very fair to see, but after all the beech trunk is the tree's treasure. I never pass a beech without a



BEECH-TREES



caress, for it is carved into hundreds of hundreds of cameos so lovely as that they might each be a seal for an artist's ring and carved by Nassaro in the days when his eyesight and artist's instinct were perfection. This picture as you see it is a hint only, for every beech trunk has its own wealth of cameos. And you may use many a daylight looking over their patterns, just as you look over the precious stones

In a cabinet, without any sense of weariness or repetition.

A hackberry is a beautiful trunk. This one is a picture taken from my farm, though truth to say it is the most beautiful hackberry bole I have ever seen. Deep corrugations, as if sculptured by some genius. And indeed, so it was; for this genius sculptor was God. He is painter, poet, landscape-gardener, botanist, lover of flowers, keeper of birds,

architect of mountains and stars, and sculptor who fashions rocks, river beds, and sea cliffs, and tree branches and cloud landscapes into artistic and unfathomable loveliness. Each thing I see him make seems his masterpiece, though I know it is not that he has done above the ordinary for him, but that I am filled with his glory of doing, until I can contain no more, even as the sea's channels can contain no more oceans.

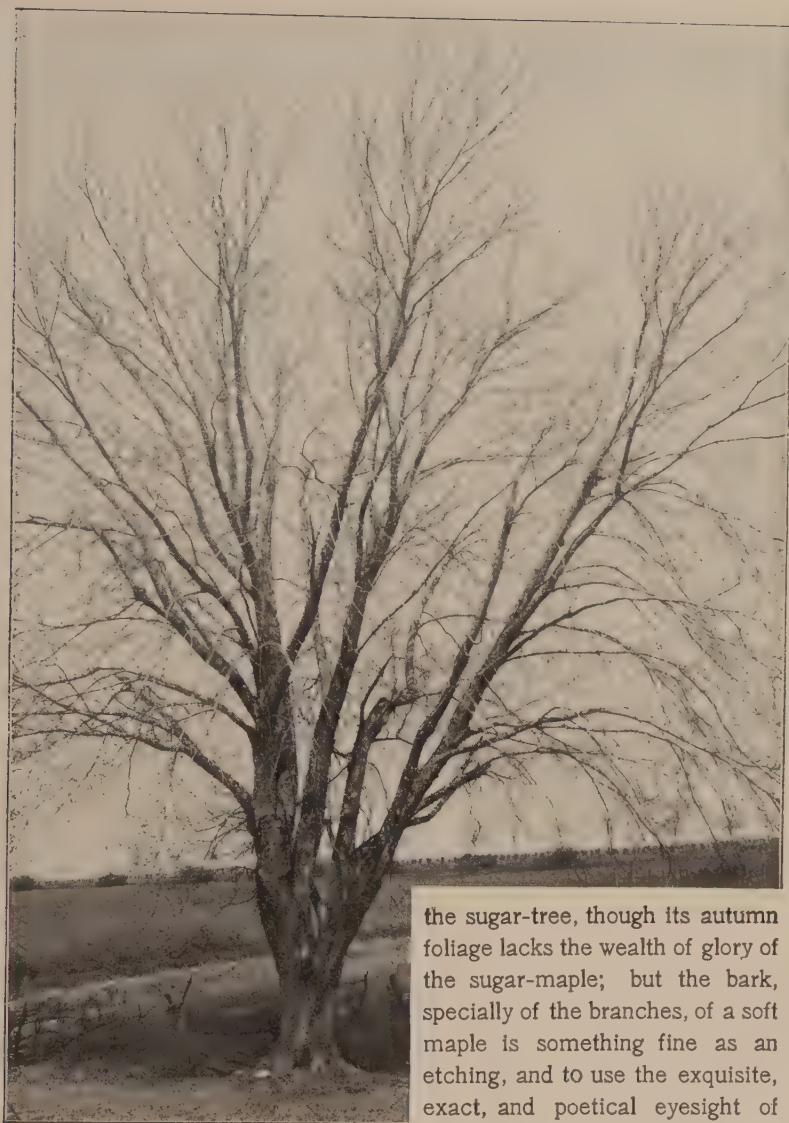
A walnut-tree is very beautiful. Its corrugations of bark, dark almost to blackness, are always possessed of witchery to my eyes. I see through the tree as if it were dusky amber, the black tawinness of walnut wood. No wonder that through centuries walnut has been favored wood; for who that has eyes to see but must love it? But walnut is never beautiful by the skill of man, be that skill however great, as when it stands solitary on the green woodland background of a hillside, and I seem to see through the graven rind its wine-dregs of wood, and feel its beauty as I do the beauty of the dawn.

In winter, wild crab-trees are strong as strength. Their trunks are usually twisted as if some storm had wrenched them with violent and outrageous hands, but the virile tree refused to be twisted down, and wears its signs of struggle and survival on its front like scars on a soldier's forehead. Why, a Greek wrestler's sinewy arm and leg carved in bronze are not to my eyes so herculean and fascinating as a crab-apple trunk seen under a winter's gray sky. When spring comes and this bronze statue flashes into flower and perfume such as even spring with her bewildering riches of such, has only few of,—I do not thrill to that exotic loveliness of bloom as I do to the sheer bronze of the sinewy trunk, standing knee-deep in winter's snows.

A soft maple is more beautiful in bark than



A WALNUT



MAPLE

the sugar-tree, though its autumn foliage lacks the wealth of glory of the sugar-maple; but the bark, specially of the branches, of a soft maple is something fine as an etching, and to use the exquisite, exact, and poetical eyesight of "Gert Jan Ridd" (than whom,

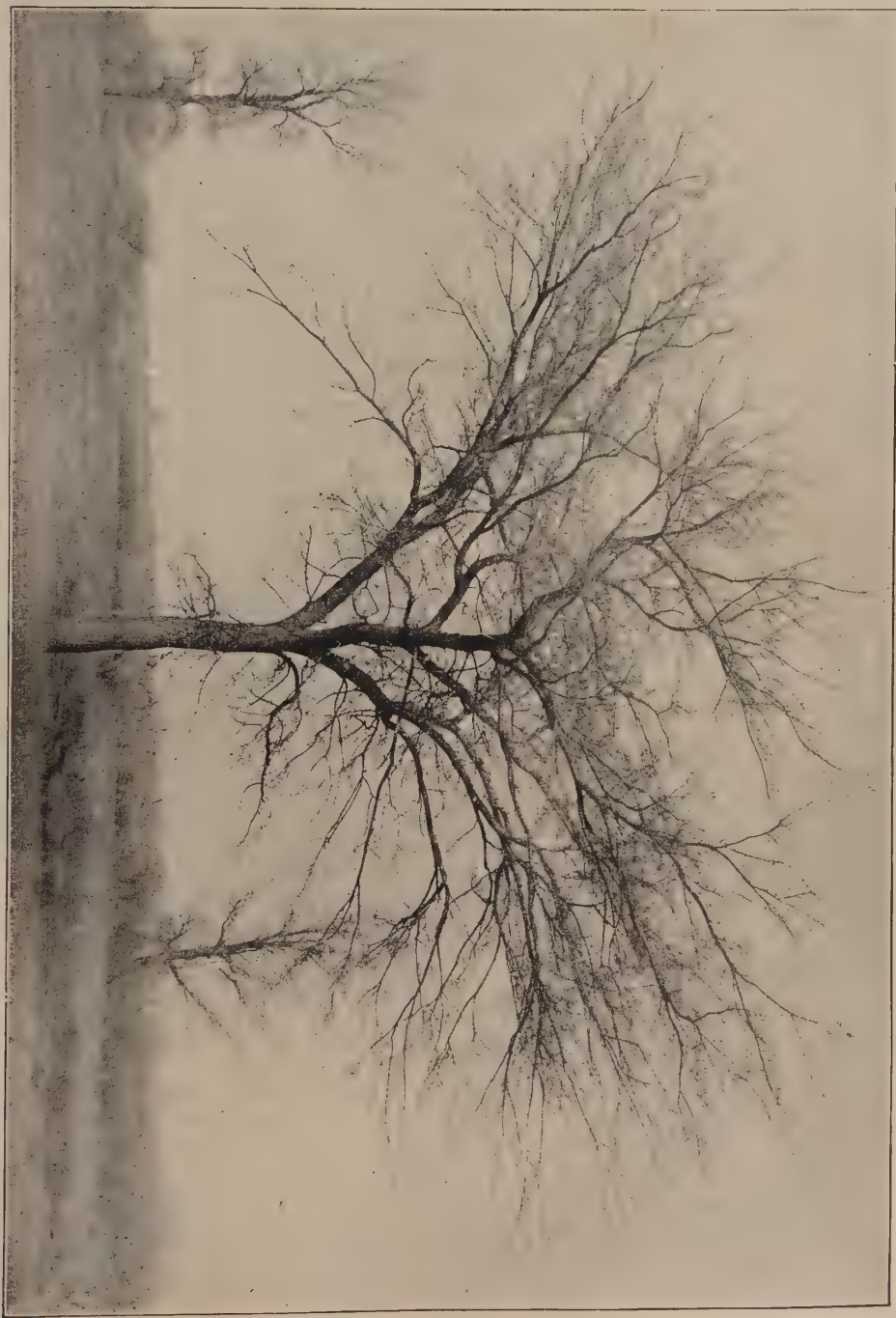
none, not even Ruskin, sees nature with surer fidelity), is "like the bottom of a red doe's foot." I can not speak of the maple bark to effect, nor can it be photographed, nor painted, but I love to look on its finished beauty by the hour, and hold my hand on its faint flame-color as if I were warmed thereby. I make mention of this delicate bark, if haply I may make more than myself lovers of this dainty doing of Nature's leisure

And the elm-tree is always bewitching. In summer, when you can tell this tree far as you can catch the contour across the fields by the grace of its pose, and its rhythmic swaying of branches as keeping time to music we do not hear,—in winter the tree has its winter array. No tree in our woods has the beautiful network of branches the elm has. Flung on the snow or seen against the blue sky or gray, it is as graceful as any tree that spreads under the sky. Every branch has its own household of tracery and delicacies of invention, for you shall find the unexpected in the elm-tree's goings. No palm branch waved at temple or at triumph, is fair as an elm branch. You can feast your eyes on it as on the tracteries of a frosty window-pane. To try to wrestle an elm-tree down (despite its beauty, for beauty and virility do not often coincide), seems something the storm-winds of summer or winter do not have audacity to attempt. Elms have a firmer hold on the earth than an oak. They dig for rootage deep and far. They pre-empt the land where they sink their anchorage of roots. I do not recall to have seen an elm-tree uprooted by tempests, though I have seen tall pine-trees fallen like dead soldiers, and oaks lying, half-fallen or wholly, like a man sorely wounded; but elms have a tenacity of fiber and a sagacity in ramification of roots which all but defy storm-winds. Those who would kill an elm, girdle it, though I resent their cowardly practice. It seems so dastardly to open the veins of a man you have not the courage to face nor the force to kill. The Cambridge elm, with its glory of history seen through its leaves and sitting beneath its shadow, is scarcely so engaging as the elms of the ordinary forest; for they are so beautiful as to need no wealth of historical association to make them fair.

The bark of elms, in corrugation and in tint, is enough like the ruts of dry country roads to be accused of plagiarism. Who knows but the elm has wrapped about him a cloak worn by dusty summer? There is in any case a dusty-road look to his garments, for which he must be held to account. I like the fit and tone of his garment.

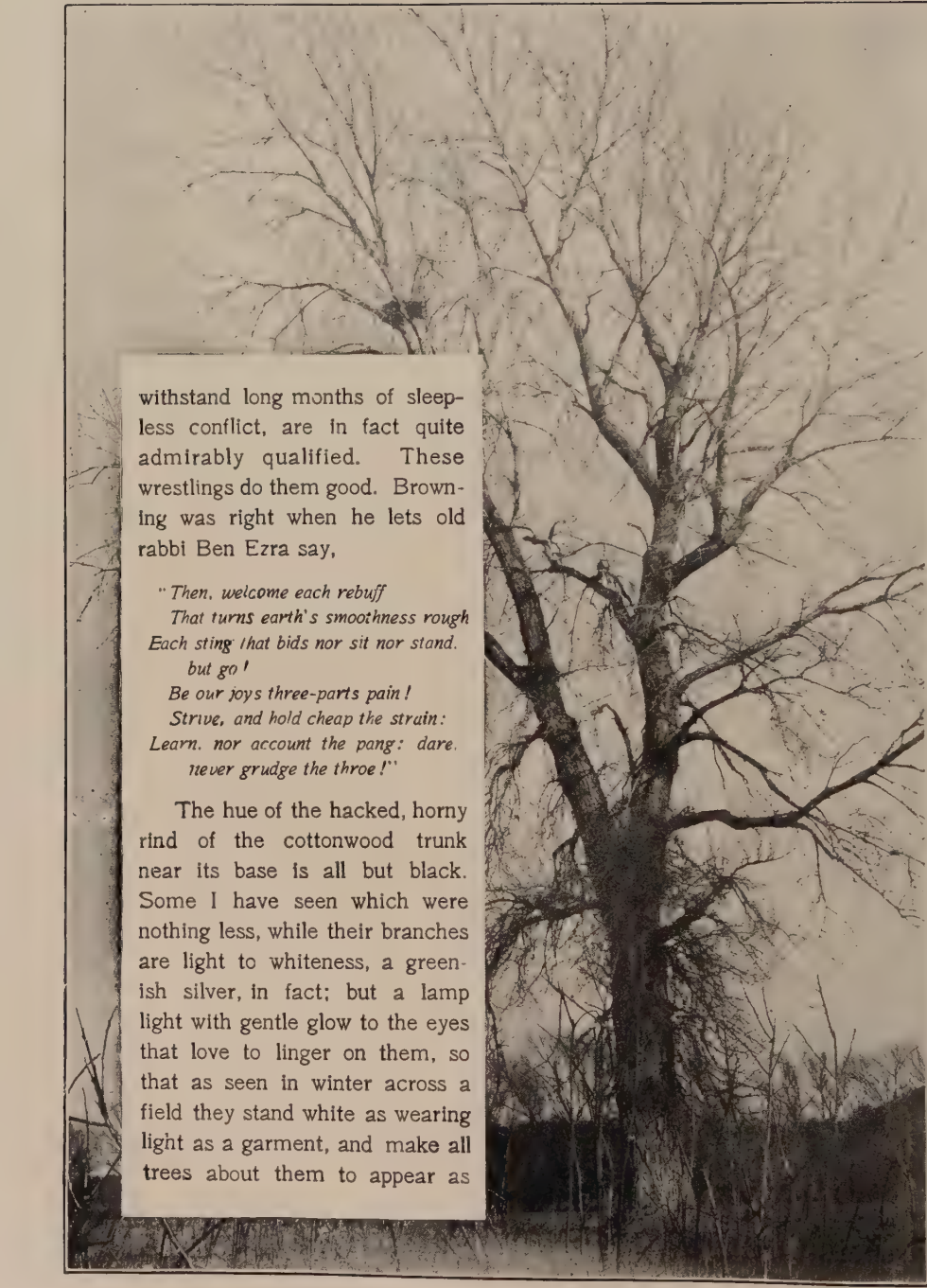
The oak-tree has the allegiancy of the centuries; for beneath its shadows the Druids worshiped and built altars, as if it were half-deity, or more. Words are weak as tears when they essay to tell an oak-tree's epic. Bashan was land of oaks as Lebanon was land of cedars, but oaks are freesoilers. They live across the world. They voyage to all shores, and stand ready to greet the colonist when he sets foot upon the strand. They met the Puritans, and DeSoto, and Coronado, and gave them welcome. Great ships have been debtors to them for hulls,

THE ELM



huge to withstand tempests; kings have wainscoated their palace walls with these exquisitely striated woods; and pictures that were priceless have been framed in their tawny loveliness. Why, no picture can be more beautiful than the graining of oak. To place it on a floor is a sin; for it is like walking on a picture: but to wainscoat stately rooms with it, and swing its perpetual beauty in doors to halls of festival, and to build mantels and line ceilings,—that is just and legitimate. In seeing a winter oak you see all of the fine lines drawn by the graver's tool of the great God, who has time off to spend in making the oak as beautiful as inlaid work of pearl and onyx. And the great limbs billow out shaggy and fierce, and their photogravure is something to dream of by night. I know a nook near Cawker City, Kansas, a peninsula which is almost an island by the tortuous winding of what used to be a stream 'n those days when the rains drained them into stream-beds rather than sinking into tilled fields; and here in a country almost devoid of trees, is a bur-oak forest where great oaks grow, some of which fling shadows seventy feet in diameter, and under whose shade a caravan might rest under shadows so dense no ray of sunlight could peer through. This oak-grove is worth making a pilgrimage to see; for I have not often seen its equal anywhere across this continent. When winter winds of might charge down on the forest, then an oak-tree laughs like a lover, and shoots out his hundred furious fists until the storm-winds are abashed. None must think to commiserate this battling giant. Ulysses loved the battle of warring Trojans and stormy seas, but not more than the oak-tree loves its conflict. These winter onsets are better to him than dew, or rain, or gentle spring zephyrs. Through all his huge trunk, fury runs. He drinks wine pressed from the grapes of wrath; and his huge arms hammer at the wind; and like the sound of winds from the seas in the rigging of the ships, so shrills the wind through the branches of this oaken harp. There is joy to the oak-trees when storm-winds blow.

Cottonwoods have a fan-top spread out in bare wantonness as if to catch every wind that passed that way. Not summer is in winter cottonwoods; for their summer minstrelsy is as rainfall in the dusk of evenings; but exposing wide expanse of branches to the winds, winter cottonwoods make grave and noble music. I think it strange how seldom these winter trees have broken branches lying beneath them; in other words, with what uniformity they conquer the winds. You would not think those long, slender branches, seemingly so disqualified to



withstand long months of sleepless conflict, are in fact quite admirably qualified. These wrestlings do them good. Browning was right when he lets old rabbi Ben Ezra say,

*"Then, welcome each rebuff
That turns earth's smoothness rough
Each sting that bids nor sit nor stand,
but go!
Be our joys three-parts pain!
Strive, and hold cheap the strain:
Learn, nor account the pang: dare,
never grudge the throe!"*

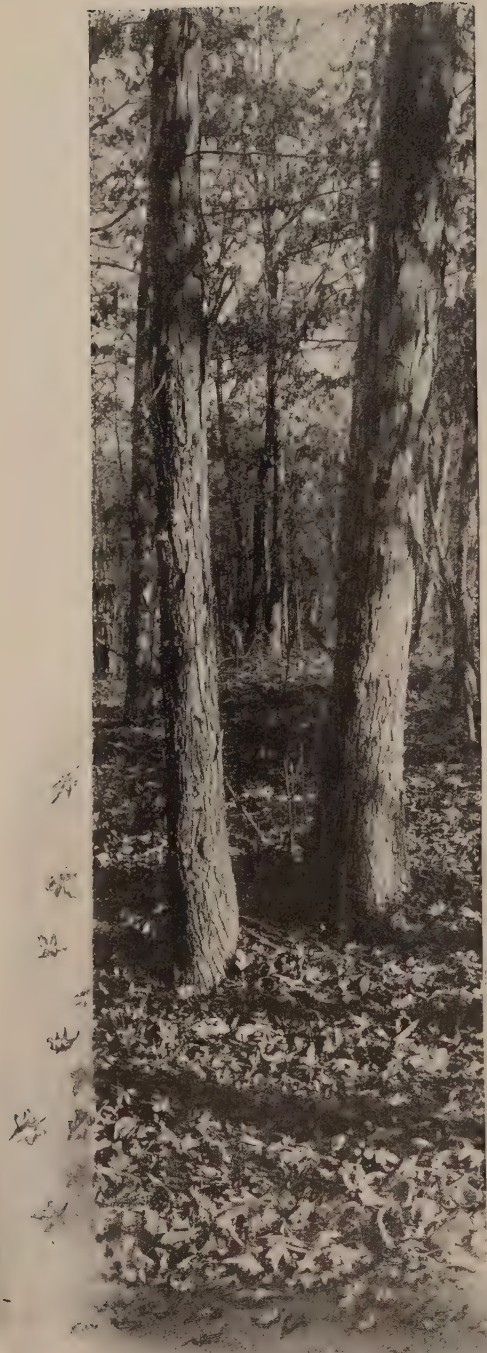
The hue of the hacked, horny rind of the cottonwood trunk near its base is all but black. Some I have seen which were nothing less, while their branches are light to whiteness, a greenish silver, in fact; but a lamp light with gentle glow to the eyes that love to linger on them, so that as seen in winter across a field they stand white as wearing light as a garment, and make all trees about them to appear as

under a cloud, while only the cottonwoods stood in the sunlight. They make the dawn and summer to rise upon me whenever I cast my eyes their way, which is so often as to preclude enumerations. Cottonwoods under cloud or light refuse to forget the sunlight. I think they remember the sunny Kansas plains where they are often the sole tree occupants of wide wildernesses of grass. I can not be quit of the radiancy of these trees, standing tall, and with what seems a promise of sunshine for all the woods. They are the true light-bearers. Because of this peculiarity cottonwoods in winter days have a surprise about them as though they had recently hailed from some land of delight, and kept glad memories always smiling in their looks. I would it lay in me to get people to watch the cottonwoods in winter as to listen to them in summer. I know not which mood entices my spirit the more. In summer when all is laughter the cottonwoods weep; in winter when all things else are sad or angry, cottonwoods are laughing like a holiday. They are the contradictions of the year; and may their beauty never know a twilight!

Willows always interest me. They are a fragile wood, but who would think so to see them travel along all shores? They are like frail men, who with a body as weak as that of William the Third do such herculean labor as would incline you to think old Samson hugged at the temple's pillars. Weakness hath its own puissance. Their sweet pensiveness, their graceful droop along every ravine, saying as plainly as speech can say, "Where I throw my shadow you shall find a living well;" their dainty lance-leaves, among the earliest greenery of spring, and sometimes among the latest greenery of autumn, and in whose shadows summer winds seem prone to fall asleep or loiter idly; their dainty yellow of foliage of the autumntime, and their struggle with the winter's wind without complaint, and with strange career of victory, are things which should forever endear the willow to the lover of God's Out-of-Doors.

A willow never stands erect. Either it can not or will not. I incline to the belief that the latter is the correct view. As in the picture, willows lean at an easy angle as in pensive mood. They dream, mayhap, upon the days that are no more.

*"O, those old days! Those near yet far off days!
Paged with dear legends, winsome with sweet ways!
When spendthrift hearts all went a-gypsyng:
Cared naught for form or statute laws or king,
But lived in melodies."*



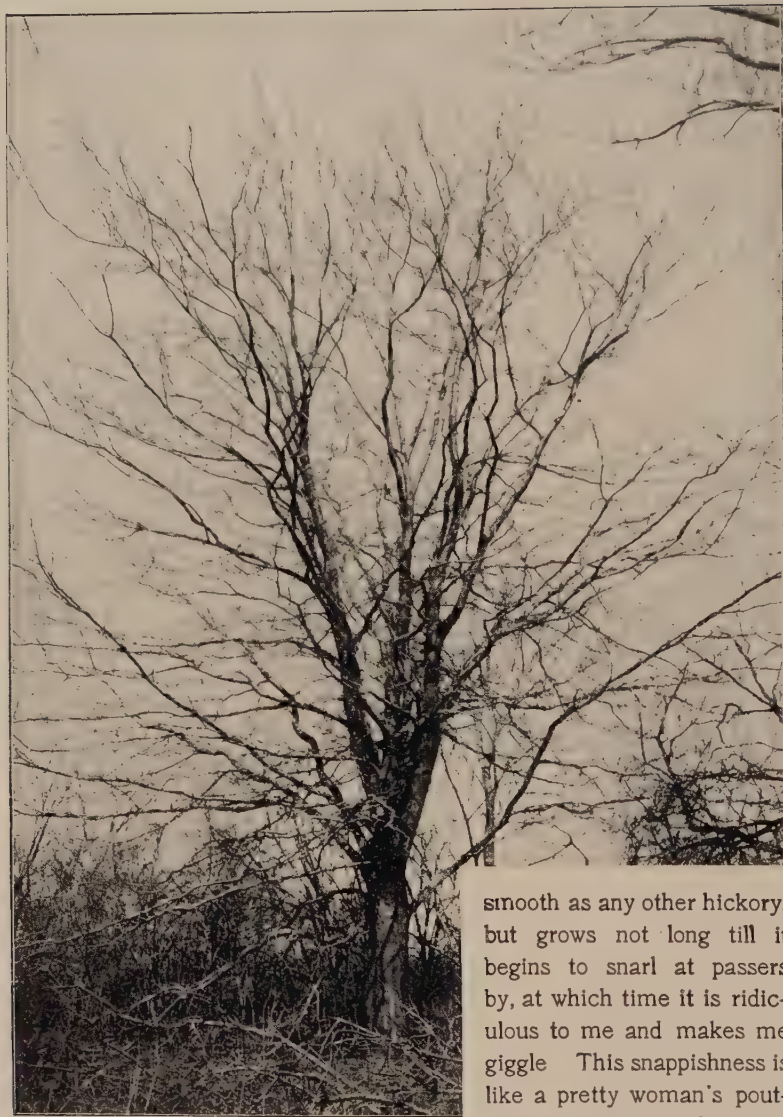
Mayhap, it is of these days the willows dream, but dream they do, summer or winter. They have a touch of pathos in them evermore. The bark is like to an elm so as to be easily mistaken for it, and ashy-red in hue. These of the picture are taken from "my farm" in the ravine I set such store by, and where in springtime the waters will pour about them to their knees; and they know it! They love that knee-deep wading like little boys. In spring, with their flash of early green, or in summer, with half slumber, and their pensive droop of leaf and branch and trunk—well, God did certainly deal tenderly with the willows, and made them very fair!

The shell-bark hickory is the surliest seeming tree in the wood, save only the honey-locust, which is vindictive and humanity-hating as Timon of Athens, though when the fair summer is blooming this misanthropic tree flashes out in throngs of tiny leaves almost as exquisite as ferns, and much after their likeness. Not any tree has any more beautiful leaves than a thorny locust, so man-hating and beast-hating, that even the merry squirrel can not climb it, but in which birds build nests, as in a citadel; for there the larger birds can not come seeking prey, nor the wise serpent. This evil, angry tree so comes to serve good uses, building with angry skill a fortress

where the gentle birds may dwell in quiet, far from enemies In the winter season, however, nothing can be less propitiating The thorn-spines jag out in clusters on every angry bole and branch.

But as I have said, next to the locust is the shell-bark hickory Summer or winter it curls up its lips like a bull-cur. As a child I used to be insulted by them, though like crusty people I have known, they would snarl at you and make you merry at the same minute; for when fall frosts whiten the house-tops a little, I was wont to go to the woods of the Marais Des Cygnes and find a hail of hickory nuts slanting to earth; and I would make merry beneath the branches, getting oftentimes a sound rap on the head by a friendly nut on its way to the autumn leaves lying thick upon the ground. But surly the shell-bark hickory is. Great flakes of its bark curling inevitably from the trunk, as you have seen old shingles curl from an ancient roof, dyed black as darkness in long years of rain and drench of summer sun. Surly the shell-barks are, but beautiful. I have loved to love them more than I will here set down, lest some who read should think me foolish; I pass no one of them in my wanderings without stopping to watch its ill-fit of garments and truculence of demeanor. A baby shell-bark is





LOCUST

smooth as any other hickory, but grows not long till it begins to snarl at passers by, at which time it is ridiculous to me and makes me giggle. This snappishness is like a pretty woman's pouting, attractive as laughter.

And when a shell-bark sap-

ling is, say, twenty feet high, I have seen a bark which would suit the glad fancies of an artist. Lichens of select sort gather on their curling rinds, yellowish and greenish lichens being favorites, and when these are on the bark and out under winter rains, they become beautiful as photogravures. If you suppose that, one shell-bark seen, all are

seen, you were never more mistaken. Each has its charm like man and woman. There is no duplicating. God makes his creations to be like the marked copies of de luxe editions. Shell-barks are among the treasures of my woods, and among the richest riches of winter forests.

Not lightly to estimate these winter riches, I would profess that of all winter trees the sycamore is most beautiful. In Indiana, on the Wabash, they are at their kingliest. I have not seen their equals. There they grow stately with few limbs, and the sycamores stand pillars of carven marble. The sycamore is to me a fascinating tree for two special reasons. First, where he lives, and second, how he does. Oaks and elms and walnuts are like God's common people—plenty of them and everywhere. They grow down in broad valleys, on the edge of the stream ; they are on the hillsides climbing the bluffs ; they are on bluff edges ; they are in ravines far back from any stream where they can find an unpre-empted field for woodland ; there they dig into the earth, loam or clay, rock or woodland. Not so a sycamore, which will not of its own accord grow on hills or run up a bank from a stream. The sycamore hugs the water courses. Not, be it observed, as the willow which grows in ravines, where waters sometimes run down in marshy ground, and always knee-deep in ravines or streams, being very ducks for loving water ; for sycamores rarely or never stand in either streams or swamp places. They are coy, and stand a few feet up and back from the river's bank. They grow where water stays. You will not find them in ravines whose custom is to go dry in summer. Where waters stay, there sycamores stay. These waterways of the sycamore are of singular interest, as I think any one who studies them will agree. A wide valley on river-levels you will find thick sown to sycamores across its entire breadth, for here they reach water. A stream-edge will be sentineled with sycamores rooting above the stream, but very often leaning over the water so as to see their own faces. Infrequently I have seen them on so-called second bottoms, but as a very general rule where a bluff begins to climb, a sycamore refuses to follow. Only the other day, happening to be on the railroad that ran along the beautiful Gasconade, I watched this fine power of selection of sycamores—knowing what they want and getting it. And I saw their white pillars flash snowy against the gray skyline, or the rocky cliffs, or the dim black woodlands as they trooped along the river, never letting on they had a purpose, but always having one, huddling together ; for in this they are

cliqueish folk (a thing I can not praise since it is quite un-American). They are, moreover, lovers of ease, and scarcely working folk; but brave aristocrats they are, stately as Colonial dames, and as unbending as royal etiquette. But they held to the river and its valley. Only once did I see a dwarf on a hillside not many feet above the level of the water, and it was ashamed and seedy like a poor relation and expatriated. Sycamores can not rough it, and unless planted there will not grow on uplands, but when planted thrive admirably. Of their own liking they will not attempt unaccustomed fields. I have, at rare intervals, seen them climb up a bluff, but it was as if they had walked there in their sleep. The second strange thing about sycamores is their habits of dress. The habit of putting on thick garments, as other folks do in the cold season when winds are keen, and all agree with Hamlet, "It is a nipping and an eager air," sycamores will have nothing of. They don their heavy garments in summer, and strip them to the skin in winter. I think that one of the strangest freaks of freakish nature. Even Indians are not so outrageous of the rights of winter. What evolutionist (allwise as they are and omniscient beyond their Maker), can explain such a performance on the theory of the survival of the fittest? Summer is the time for sycamores and other people to strip for bathing in the streams, but winter bathing—why, my friends, the sycamores, you shock me and you make me shiver. I feel cold with my clothes on, and you are naked as Greek wrestlers. What a talent for individuality of procedure these sycamores have! We must allow that they have independency in their character. In autumn, when winter throws out a premonitory hoar frost to signify he is in the neighborhood, then the sycamores begin to disrobe. They take off their garments by stealth, as a maniac does. You can not, unless you are a close observer and look very narrowly, find a shred of their bark under the trees, and when they are done with their denudation you will probably not find one scrap of their garments. Watch them and see. They are strange folks. I watch them as if they were in politics. Then when they are as nude as nakedness, they are as beautiful as morning. Not the pilaster of a temple, snow-white under radiant skies of Italy is so white as these sycamore pillars. They stand tall as if they were hewn from ice-drifts, or snow-drifts, or marble-quarries. Sometimes, however, they are not snow-white, but a sort of shaded green, a flesh green, as I may say, for they look for all the world like flesh, and stand faint emerald against the sky like a forecast of spring. But whether flesh green or marble white,



SYCAMORES

they are bewitching and satisfying Who knows not the sycamore is to be pitied? He has missed so much.

"The pillared dusk of sounding sycamores,"

of which the laureate sings, is not so beauty-burdened as the stately temple-pillars, lifting taper marble up as worthy for some Phidias to plant upon their Doric trunks some stately frieze wrought into panathenaic processions. Who would have thought of such a thing as a sycamore, save God only?

"The birds and beasties" of winter woods are accessories not to be forgotten

"Bare ruined choirs, where late the sweet birds sang,"

are visible in plenty. In summer these nests were hid from the eyes "of the wise and prudent," but now are open to everybody's gaze. There is no secrecy. In the leafless hedgerow is the thrush's nest, and down by the stream is the bluebird's house, and the crow's log-house of knotty and unworkmanlike construction is seen from the treetops. Crows are bold builders. They haunt treetops as swallows the eaves. These nests seem so ill-built that one would tumble down if a flapping wing of its own builder were to cuff it unwarily, but, as experience shows, are so sturdily constructed that all the winter's tempests leave them in good repair. These crows are deceiving folks. We thought they tumbled their houses together in an unworkmanlike fashion, when lo, we found they built against seasons and naked winters, and storm-wind's brow-beating. And the crow is in the winter woods. His Satanic blackness glares through the naked woods, and makes a sort of plaintive picture. He flies low over the trees of winter and settles often for caucus or religious meeting,—I really never have been able to tell which. But I am not his chaplain; so it makes not much matter.

And the redbird flings himself through the network of branches, like a firebrand borne by daylight; and his whistle is always as from a cheery heart. The cardinal is warming to the eyes, and his carelessness of weather makes him to me fraternal. I defy weather, only asking that there be weather. The kind is not for me to say, seeing I am not the weather bureau, but some kind of weather, fair, foul, wintry, windy, quiet; snow, rain, sleet, are little odds to me; I enjoy them all, and go out in one with the same delight as in the other. Each has its impact with my spirit. The cardinal cheers himself not with the hope of spring coming, but with the delight of winter here. All seasons make love to him and he to all seasons; and when he flings his torch across the gray-

black winter branches, and flies like an arrow of fire, shot by a hidden bowman, all the gray woods are lit up and radiant

And the junco (I call him so by sort of conventionality as a tribute of social order, but call him by sweet familiarity, the snow-bird), so I love him. The snows and he blow in the same wind. The fiercer the wind the more rollicking his demeanor. Storms are fiddle-music to his jiggling feet. Some birds shun winter and love summer. A snowbird shuns summer and loves winter. He seeks winter in summer. He is a hard-weather bird, like a stormy petrel. Sparrows in winter cling to hedges and to sheltered places, if there be any; but snowbirds get out where the winds sweep wildest, and the snow curls like white soot, sicked on by furious blasts. Then the snowbird revels and is glad. How often I have watched him and rejoiced in his pluck! Such a little laddie, but such a laughing courage, like a drummer lad in the battle's front.

Squirrels, rabbits, coons, and sometimes the barking wolf, with its wild-dog waggishness, cross and recross these wintry, snowy woods, their tracks returning on each other as in frantic glee. A rabbit is a timid jester, but loves a joke, and in moonlight forgets his fear and keeps tryst, and pounds the ground with his heels in a sort of bellicose hilarity. O, there are good times in winter woods—just as good times were had in the old pioneer days, with sleigh rides, and bussing-bees, and spellings-down. With trees in battle, birds and beasts making merry in the storm, you will do well to call winter a summer of delight.

When slow mists make tree trunk and branch a sheet of ice, and when rain comes after mists and thickens the ice into a sword-sheath thickness, and trees stand against the light armed in silver, then might a dumb man sing for joy. Watch this glow against the sun, and hear this crash of battle-hour when their naked sword-blades smite together in indignant warfare, see them clad in "light as in a garment," and you wonder what God does not think of. What God does not think of none need desire to invent. These icy armors are brilliant as any old-time armorer could make of silver, and this is a world lit with silver, green, and blood, and crossed with march of winds, and the tangle of branches, and the silver bird's nests, and cornfields standing erect as soldiers on duty with silver plumes, and the wide-armed oak harnessed in silver, but nothing daunted. When sleets are on, the world is transfigured and the heart rejoices above the spring. Or when snows stream over the skies

and smoke through the tree tops and make all the weeds and bushes stoop under their weight of whiteness, and the boughs of the forest droop under their weights of snow as under weights of superabundant fruitage, and the lanes of the woods are dusk at noon when the snows come in silence, but with the dim lights of sunsets and after, and earth seems a memory, so far off it feels, then the woods are bewilderingments. They are not kin to what we had known them. We could not recognize these as the woodland ways our fond feet had trodden so often. All is new and strange, and we wander as those who have set foot on shores undiscovered till now. When snows dim all the sky and hide far and near in fogbanks of white wonder, then, friend, go into the woods and see them keep tryst with the snows and keep thy lips closed as in inaudible prayer, and walk quietly (for you can do no other when snows carpet the dead leaves), and have a hush of spirit before God as if you walked cathedral solitudes. And when bitter-sweet

"Hangs its tufts of crimson berries,"

and buckberries wear their surly reds, and the red-oaks hold their leaves and shiver night and day as with perpetual ague; and when the storms roar and are angry, and the trees rush out with ecstasy of gladness to give battle to the winds; then winter trees are glorious, and I watch them, and fellowship with them, and bless my God I live where winter comes, and where deciduous trees are plentiful, and where simple beauty gives way betimes to massive, yet beautiful might. Then commend me to the battle and fury and anthems of the winter trees.



THROUGH THE PINE WOODS

GOLDEN-ROD





WHERE GOLDEN-ROD BLOOMS

GOLDEN-ROD

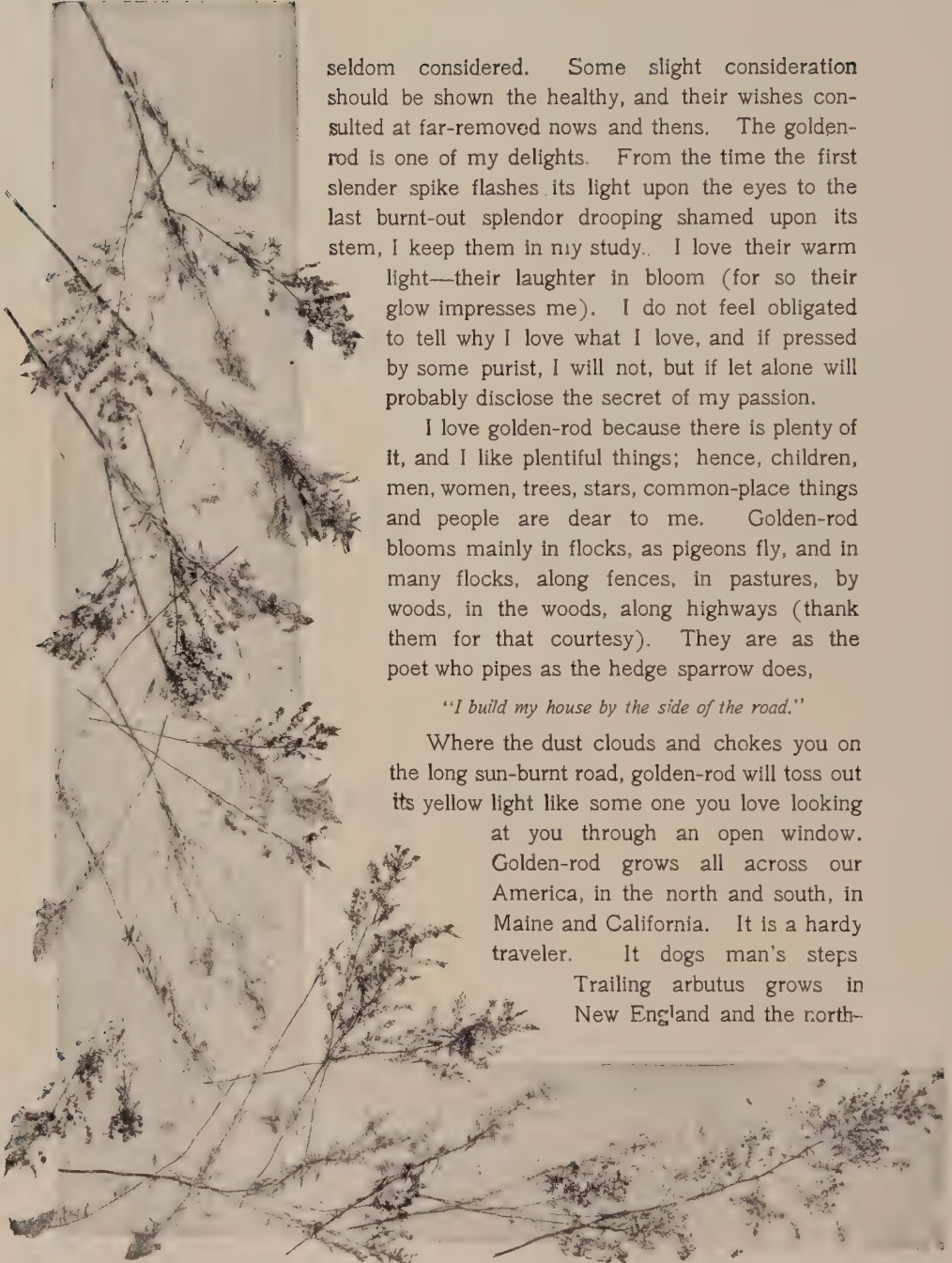


NOBODY has been considerate enough of a wise curiosity to tell us why in autumn the purples and yellows are the lavish colors. I would thank some of the knowing for such item of information. But certain I am that the autumn flowers riot in yellow hues. They have caught the sun in their heart through all the golden summer,—have caught every beam coming their way and held each as the naiads held fair Hylas what time he bathed him in Scamander, while his purple chlamys lay upon the shore. The autumn flowers seem never to forget a syllable of sunlight any more than love forgets a syllable of wooing; and in the

Fall in blooming they rehearse all they have heard, as lovers tell each other all the sweet words the other had written or said, while each listening says, "Did I say that? and when? and you remembered?"—and then they kiss each other on the lips. So the sunflowers and black-eyed susans and the golden-rods save up and rehearse the sunshine of the year. Bless them for their tenacious memories.

Golden-rod may be deleterious to hay fever votaries, but is sympathetic and friendly to those of us who indulge in no such lachrymose luxury. Well people have some rights, though they are





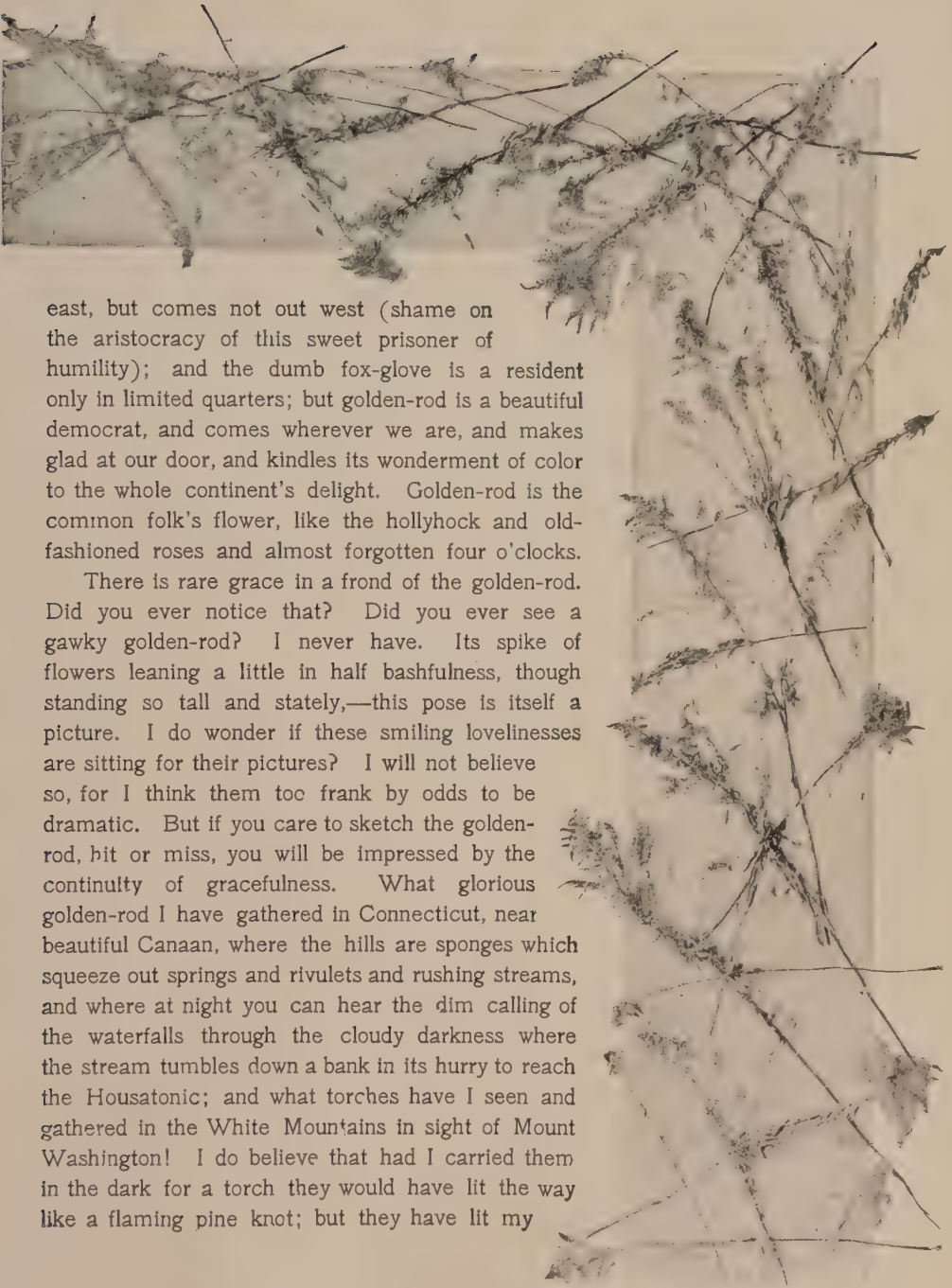
seldom considered. Some slight consideration should be shown the healthy, and their wishes consulted at far-removed nows and thens. The golden-rod is one of my delights. From the time the first slender spike flashes its light upon the eyes to the last burnt-out splendor drooping shamed upon its stem, I keep them in my study. I love their warm light—their laughter in bloom (for so their glow impresses me). I do not feel obligated to tell why I love what I love, and if pressed by some purist, I will not, but if let alone will probably disclose the secret of my passion.

I love golden-rod because there is plenty of it, and I like plentiful things; hence, children, men, women, trees, stars, common-place things and people are dear to me. Golden-rod blooms mainly in flocks, as pigeons fly, and in many flocks, along fences, in pastures, by woods, in the woods, along highways (thank them for that courtesy). They are as the poet who pipes as the hedge sparrow does,

"I build my house by the side of the road."

Where the dust clouds and chokes you on the long sun-burnt road, golden-rod will toss out its yellow light like some one you love looking at you through an open window. Golden-rod grows all across our America, in the north and south, in Maine and California. It is a hardy traveler. It dogs man's steps

Trailing arbutus grows in New England and the north-



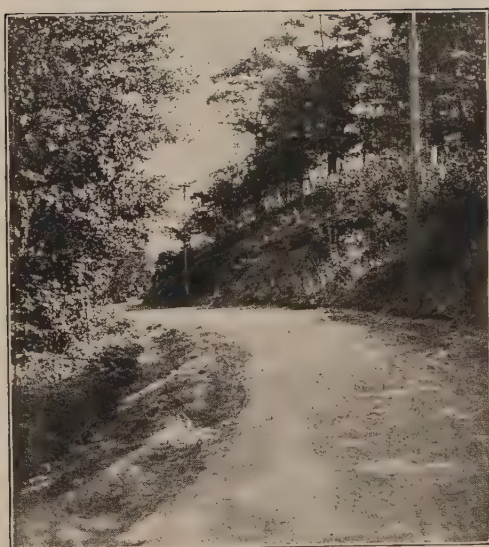
east, but comes not out west (shame on the aristocracy of this sweet prisoner of humility); and the dumb fox-glove is a resident only in limited quarters; but golden-rod is a beautiful democrat, and comes wherever we are, and makes glad at our door, and kindles its wonderment of color to the whole continent's delight. Golden-rod is the common folk's flower, like the hollyhock and old-fashioned roses and almost forgotten four o'clocks.

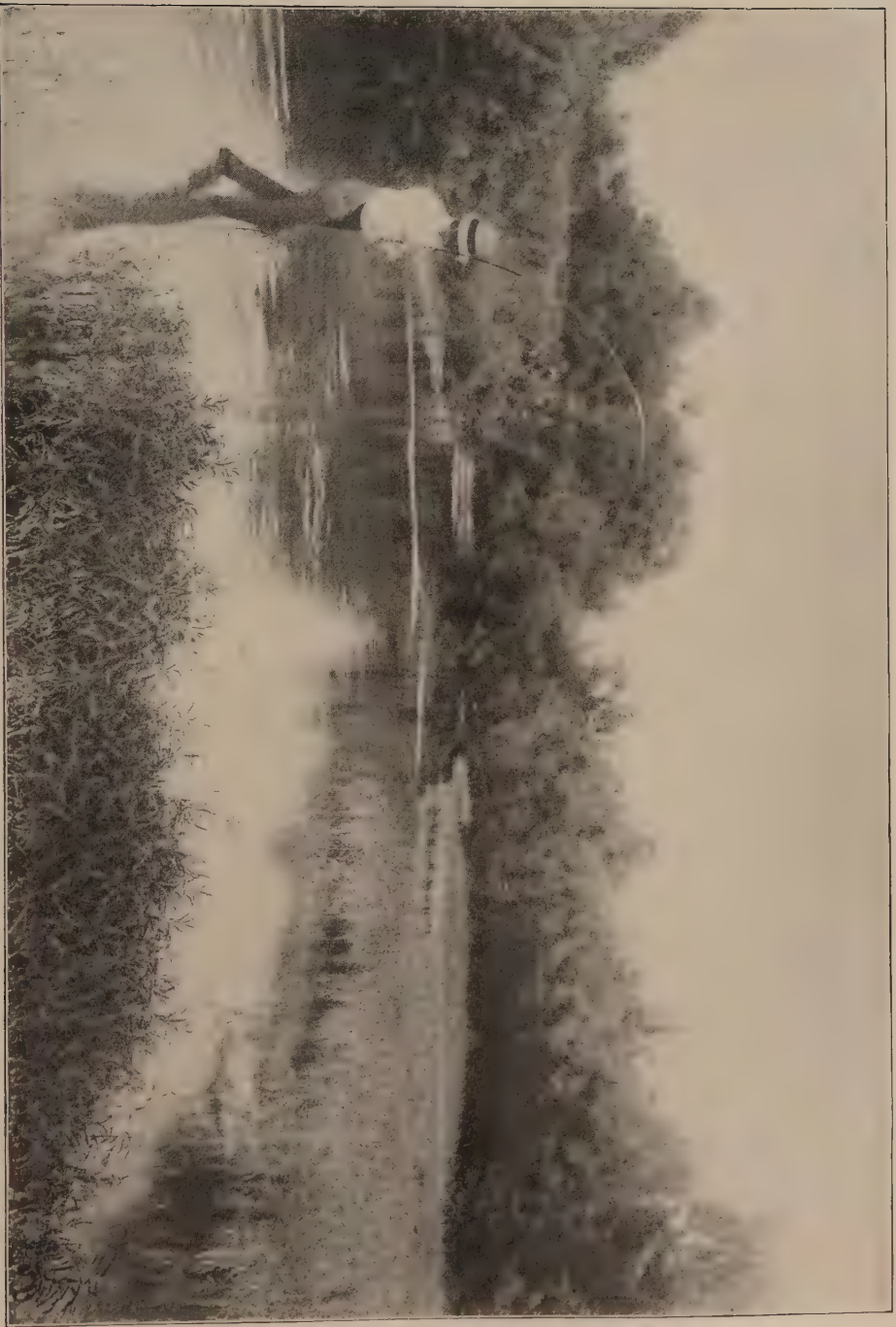
There is rare grace in a frond of the golden-rod. Did you ever notice that? Did you ever see a gawky golden-rod? I never have. Its spike of flowers leaning a little in half bashfulness, though standing so tall and stately,—this pose is itself a picture. I do wonder if these smiling lovelinesses are sitting for their pictures? I will not believe so, for I think them too frank by odds to be dramatic. But if you care to sketch the golden-rod, hit or miss, you will be impressed by the continuity of gracefulness. What glorious golden-rod I have gathered in Connecticut, near beautiful Canaan, where the hills are sponges which squeeze out springs and rivulets and rushing streams, and where at night you can hear the dim calling of the waterfalls through the cloudy darkness where the stream tumbles down a bank in its hurry to reach the Housatonic; and what torches have I seen and gathered in the White Mountains in sight of Mount Washington! I do believe that had I carried them in the dark for a torch they would have lit the way like a flaming pine knot; but they have lit my

heart on many a dark night in winter, when the wind whistled and shivered, and the shutters slammed against the house in dismal din. And I have gathered golden-rod on the heights of Quebec, hard by where brave Wolfe fell, and down the St. Lawrence toward the northern sea, and on Mt. Desert Island, neighboring the rocky cliffs and melancholy pines, and beside beautiful Champlain and back in the Adirondacks where the world seemed removed across some wide, wide sea, and in the Rockies where the continent billowed toward the skies, and the crest forgot to sink, and along the Great Lakes where the billows call like a sea, and on the fringe of the great desert with its parched lips and cheeks where fever burns forever, and along the Wabash with its stately tulip-trees and sycamores, beautiful as the pillars of the Parthenon, and along the Sacramento as it widens seaward, beside the Potomac as it stops a moment tenderly to lave the bank on whose sloping side Washington lies buried, and on the Hudson when the Palisades were all in conflagration in autumn days, and on my own beloved prairies stretching mile on mile through Indian summer haze—so widely have I gathered the golden-rod, and reverently hope I may be commissioned to gather its golden sprays in heaven; so shall I feel quite at home.



I GO A-FISHING





LAYS SNARES LIKE AN ASSASSIN

I GO A-FISHING



TO tell the truth, scarcely a fisherman's bent as you will suggest, I am an ill fisherman. I would not decoy some ardent lover of rod and line to read these inconsequent lines, thinking I was piscatorial artist, or that I had fast friendship with our good friend, quaint and gentle, Ike Walton. We are bare acquaintances. I met him once, once only, along the river Dove taking a grayling from his hook, and so not seeing me, for so true a fisherman was always more engrossed with fish than men (nor do I blaine

him); and I was only wandering along the stream watching the shadows on the quiet water and the pools where sunlight came and staid as taking a whole day of holiday. No, I know as little about fishing as about botany. I know not what sort of bait catches what sort of fish. I seldom get a nibble, and much more rarely get a fish, though Providence knows I wish the fish knew how safe it is to intrust themselves to my hook, for I throw back into the stream, with scant reluctance, the fish I catch. I am much more pious and tender-hearted than your piety-professing fisherman, who, while he talks gently of the "gentle art," kills whom he surprises, like any other bandit, and lays snares like an assassin, and fresh in iniquity says his prayers like a murderer making the sign of the cross above the corpse he has made. No, I never knew enough, or so little, I know not which, as to succeed in catching fish, yet I say boldly, though as I hope with modesty, that I can throw a line into the water and let it stay there with a degree of resolution worthy of a French cavalier of the reign of Louis the Saint. To state the facts frankly, as becometh a Christian, I, having had many friends who were

valorous fishermen, am persuaded that it is next door to an impossibility to be a chronic fisherman and not become a chronic hyperbolist (I use this term out of my love for my fishermen friends, and my disinclination to use the more ordinary and direct word which differs in no slightest shade of meaning. I refer to the little radical among the words which is pronounced liar). There must be some men of unimpaired virtue (I do not speak this in any haughty spirit). Truthfulness, like persecuted goodness, must have some fortress to which to retreat; and in claiming to be an unsuccessful fisherman it occurs to me that it has become apparent that I am this rocky fortress of incorrupted truth. Fish and men, specially the fish, may depend on me. I absolutely refuse to prevaricate unless it be entirely convenient.

If I have been digging for morals when I should have been digging bait and baiting my hook, I beg to suggest I have been decoyed to it by the moralizing moods of the professional fisherman. He always acts as if he fished from the same motive as he says his prayers, namely, piety; though I for my part think it a slimy trick to hide play under the cloud of devotion. If men will fish let them not preach and attempt to persuade others they are doing it as an act of religion. To be Shakespearean (a manner quite foreign to me), "Methinks they do profess too much." I knew a truthful fisherman once (he is dead); and I feel honor bound to prepare him an epitaph, though not at this time. But a truthful fisherman has a right to pass into the list of heroes who overbore environment and gave the lie to centuries of precedent.

I have some friends, good men and true at home and in business, but who seem to cast from them all their fine ethical distinctions so soon as they get a fish pole in their hands; and when they have donned fisherman's boots and have hold on a reel, then farewell, beautiful truth. As soon as they smell fish their truthfulness evaporates, or at all events disappears, and I think the most scientific explanation of its disappearance is to ascribe it to evaporation which goes on so systematically on the water, as is known to all students of meteorology. These friends of mine fish in remote waters, where, because of the remote distances and the lack of shipping facilities, the spoils can not be sent to admiring friends. The fisherman is thought to be by nature a sociable biped, and generous in delivering up his ill-gotten gains to those who sunburned not neither baited a hook. But these good men and true must smother their generous impulses. They are perforce reduced to the necessity of eating their own catch, or giving most of it to aborigines who inhabit the

distant lands neighboring on the great water where this whaling expedition does business in ships. Do not think me skeptical. I am no Montaigne; but I state plainly, I mislike this manner. It looks theatrical. Out of this remote water, as I have suggested, they bring no fish. We can all testify that when they fish in streams near at hand they bring no fish; and without desiring to call in question their veracity, when they tell thrilling experiences with monster pickerel and muscalonges and other finny gentry, "I doubt and fear" (perverted from Burns). They dazzle me with their fine powers of romance. They would have charmed our friend Sir Walter Scott with their powers of invention. However, they lack variety. There are evidently about the same size and temper and fighting quality of fish in all these distant fishing grounds. The same struggle besets all these doughty spirits who fight with rod and line. They find no new dragons, but are satisfied with the old ones. Why, Monsieur Athos could have told them a thing. The Three Guardsmen were fertile liars, which is a thing I delight in if one attempts that style of art (though I do not praise it. Let us have truth is my motto, which I commend with all heartiness to my many friends after having practiced it for forty to sixty days each year for a year or so). They tell the same story, these truthful fishermen.



THE SPOILS

Besides this, they suborn witnesses (yet I like not the sound of that word, it seems harsh, though indeed I mean it only in gentle courtesy as a method of expressing the facts); but they return to their neglected home fishless, sunburnt, truculent lest you believe not their fishing reminiscences, and on one occasion brought letters of reference for proof of their valiant exploits from the proprietor of the boats used, from the postmaster, from the hostelkeeper, from the guide, from the cook, and from sundry other functionaries; but when on discreet investigation (for I am of a stern and unyielding virtue in these matters), it was found that boat owner, postmaster, hostelkeeper, and the remaining witnesses were one and the same man; and on being confronted with this stern truth these men thrust each other in the ribs and laughed to tears at the wickedness of their conceits. Such things

grieve me. I fear there will be no fishermen in heaven except our elderly friend Peter, who, being himself a fisherman, may in fellow feeling let them slip through his fingers after the manner of fish.

But not to continue this secular pursuit of discovering such depravities (of which there would be no end), save so as to show why my virtue is always at white heat—however cold the thermometer may be—and that I will not be decoyed into a sport which serves, if indulged in with sufficient persistency, to eradicate the last faint vestige of truthfulness from the heart of the votary. Truth must still have an advocate. I will not lie except at intervals and under severe provocation; and so I will not fish.

I start in a leisurely fashion; for haste is foe to good fishing. To have a deliberate air is impressive to fish. I make haste slowly therefore. I am not eager to be known as starting on a voyage of fishing; for such enterprise engenders hallucinations of imagination as to the results of your expedition (in the minds of the populace). I move out calmly, like a ship starting from its harbor toward high seas. A sweet lady I know smiles at me going, with a touch of irony in her face, and a boy picking up chips on the beach pauses (much to his content, for he does not admire work) in his efforts, to give me a quizzical look, and a girl smiles at me with a wave of hand good to look upon; and I go past the board walk where the beech-trees grow and cast gentle shadows, and down the lane of sand hills peaked with pines, and loiter along with scant precipitancy as befits a man going on such solemn business as fishing; for as like Walton has shown, fishing is the soul of solemnity, and is after all no sport, but life's real and serious business. We

must not therefore approach such vocation with the least spirit of levity. I sight the river with reeds growing solid green along far banks where the stream bends in gentle curves like a boat's prow, and rest my heart in taking a long breathing view of the lake whose waters tilt against the sky green as bulk glass, and let the cool wind from its bosom lave me as if it were a wave washing some point of shore; and then I bethink me that I have no bait nor any line nor any rod, and turn back in meditative mood so as not to appear disconcerted. I reach home, take these



inconsequential items as a conventional matter wholly; and now having rod and line and bait I slip out at the rear of my house and slink around out of sight that no one see my implements of the chase (the aqueous chase), and sidle toward the river.

I consider myself adroit to the point of genius in the matter of bait. I think I ought to say that. Brains will tell even in the matter of going fishing. While supposedly adroit fishermen keep every sort of fly and deception for beguiling wary fish, I, believing that I have not been weighted down with intellectuality for naught, *sagaciously* (I have underscored that word, not through conceit, but through honest speaking), take for my bait mutton. This I do because mutton is so ambiguous, so versatile. When I have mutton (in my pocket tied up daintily as a man will tie things up, in a piece of newspaper, believing that even dead sheep should have culture opportunities), I can boldly cast for all sorts of fish inhabiting lake or stream. For certain sturdy, aged, self-reliant fish, male fish, I bait with mutton and can call it ram. This bait brings experience and pugilistic propensities to the hook. When I wish to catch young

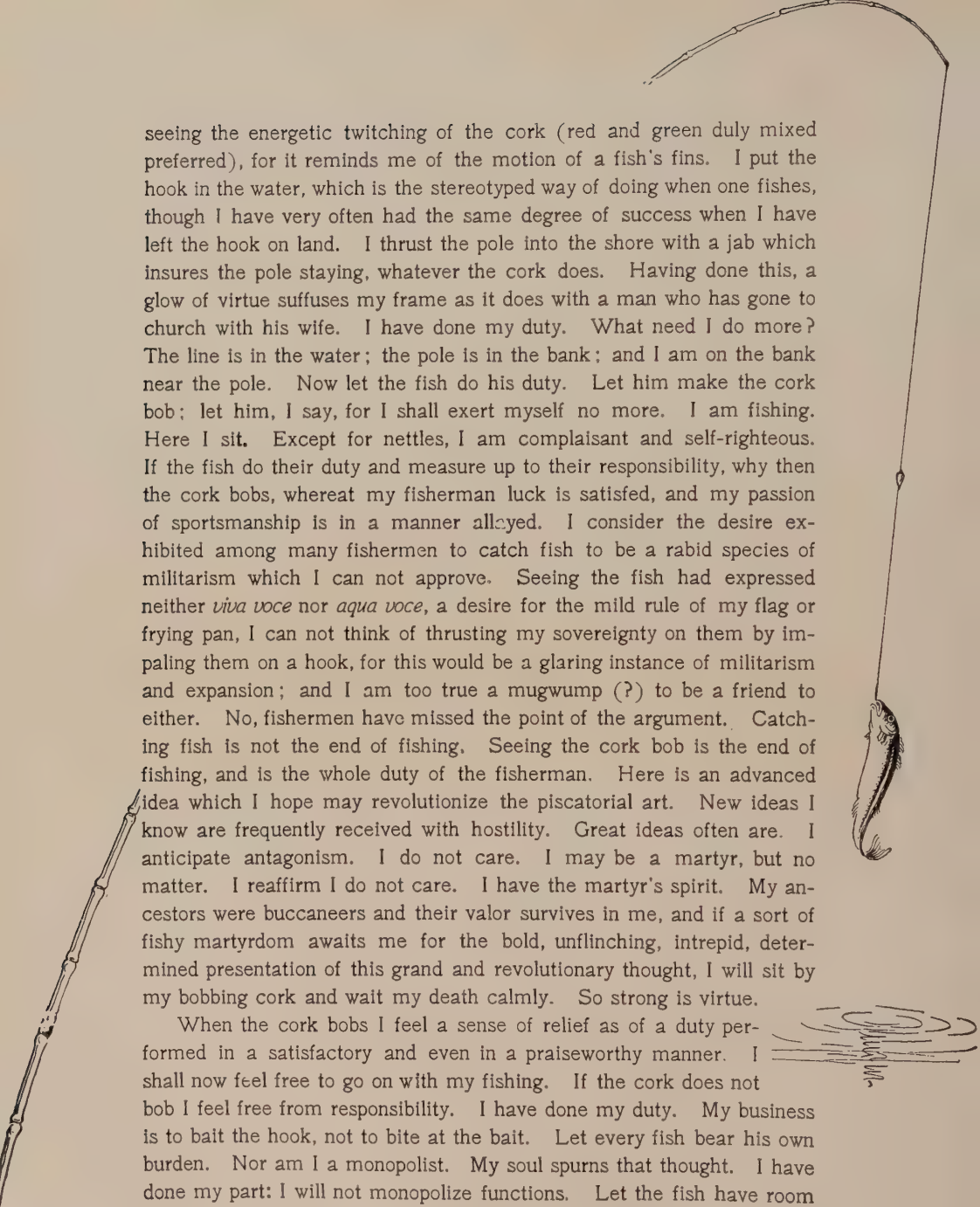


and tender fish I retain the same bait on my hook (I never change bait while it can remain on the hook. I think changing bait a breach of etiquette to the bait). While bait lasts it stays on my hook. I am courteous in all details of life. So here, I retain the bait, but speak in bleating tones and call it lamb. When I wish to approach bachelor fish with years of conquest and satiety on them I call the bait ewe. When I appeal to the gentler sex among the fish I call the bait wether. When I angle for plebeian fish I state with democratic candor, "This is mutton." The result is practical all the same. I have equal success with the varied fish and varied ages, and I think you must see that I am not nagged by the occult study of what bait to use. And I am successful as success goes with me in a heterogenous fashion, and I have the feeling that in so doing I have exhibited a manly individuality even in baiting my hook.

So with my versatile bait I set out. One rod and line suffice. I always have a cork because I like to see it bob. Things seen are mightier than things felt (quoted in part from some poet), and I enjoy

seeing the energetic twitching of the cork (red and green duly mixed preferred), for it reminds me of the motion of a fish's fins. I put the hook in the water, which is the stereotyped way of doing when one fishes, though I have very often had the same degree of success when I have left the hook on land. I thrust the pole into the shore with a jab which insures the pole staying, whatever the cork does. Having done this, a glow of virtue suffuses my frame as it does with a man who has gone to church with his wife. I have done my duty. What need I do more? The line is in the water; the pole is in the bank; and I am on the bank near the pole. Now let the fish do his duty. Let him make the cork bob; let him, I say, for I shall exert myself no more. I am fishing. Here I sit. Except for nettles, I am complaisant and self-righteous. If the fish do their duty and measure up to their responsibility, why then the cork bobs, whereat my fisherman luck is satisfied, and my passion of sportsmanship is in a manner allayed. I consider the desire exhibited among many fishermen to catch fish to be a rabid species of militarism which I can not approve. Seeing the fish had expressed neither *viva voce* nor *aqua voce*, a desire for the mild rule of my flag or frying pan, I can not think of thrusting my sovereignty on them by impaling them on a hook, for this would be a glaring instance of militarism and expansion; and I am too true a mugwump (?) to be a friend to either. No, fishermen have missed the point of the argument. Catching fish is not the end of fishing. Seeing the cork bob is the end of fishing, and is the whole duty of the fisherman. Here is an advanced idea which I hope may revolutionize the piscatorial art. New ideas I know are frequently received with hostility. Great ideas often are. I anticipate antagonism. I do not care. I may be a martyr, but no matter. I reaffirm I do not care. I have the martyr's spirit. My ancestors were buccaneers and their valor survives in me, and if a sort of fishy martyrdom awaits me for the bold, unflinching, intrepid, determined presentation of this grand and revolutionary thought, I will sit by my bobbing cork and wait my death calmly. So strong is virtue.

When the cork bobs I feel a sense of relief as of a duty performed in a satisfactory and even in a praiseworthy manner. I shall now feel free to go on with my fishing. If the cork does not bob I feel free from responsibility. I have done my duty. My business is to bait the hook, not to bite at the bait. Let every fish bear his own burden. Nor am I a monopolist. My soul spurns that thought. I have done my part: I will not monopolize functions. Let the fish have room



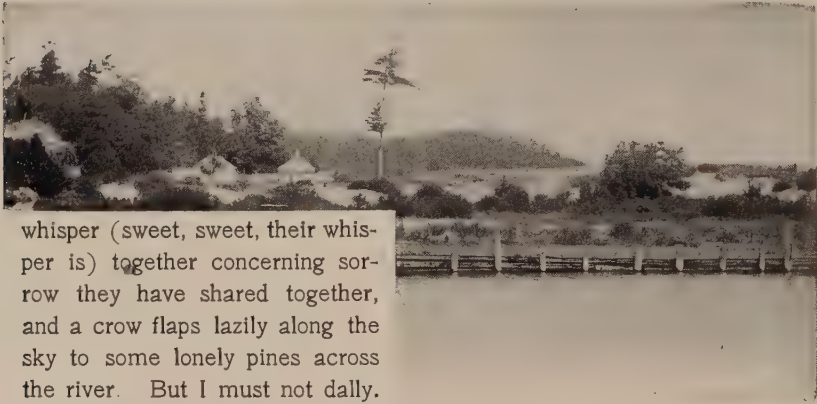
for the play of his powers. The hook is in the water. I have done my part and done it well. I will leave results to the fish; so that I (with that sagacity which marks my proceedings) take my book from my pocket—I have brought it for such occasion. If the fish are idle I must not emulate their example. I will read my friend Stephen Phillips. His pastorals shall be my chore. Now when I have a book which, to change my friend Milton's phrase, in harmony with my environment (I use that word not as knowing its meaning, but because I have seen it in print and once heard it mentioned by a speaker, now sick with the grippe—a book is the solace of those tardy hours in which a fisherman awaits the desultory humors of the fish); "Having a book" (quoted from my preceding remarks), I am well pleased and go on with my



ALONG THE STREAM

fishing. We shall get on well to-day. However inattentive to their duty the fish are, I will not be inattentive to mine. I will read a spell. My friend William Wadsworth was a fisher of my sort—he walked along the streams, loved them and dreamed of them; and I will in deference to his good taste read him betimes. Now fishing seems a levity. I leave the fish to their own devices. The cork may bob or sink for all of me. I do not care. Virtue is its own reward. I have baited the hook and have placed it in the watery element (whatever that is). Can any ethical code demand more? To do more would be a work of supererogation, and I always hold that works of supererogation are void. I will now rest until the sun gets in my eyes and the perspiration (periphrasis for sweat), starts from my face, whereupon with a fine courtesy worthy of Chesterfield I will move out of the sun's way. If I am not a gentleman I am nothing, though I desire to make no boast.

Sometimes for the sake of cultivating versatility in location though not in result, I take up my traps and find a new bank to sit upon and listen to the whine of the wind in the pine-trees (O the infinite sadness of it!), or walk on and see the stream edge its way to the base of a sand dune where not a grass tussock roots in the shifting sands, which climbing, I see some friends I love, fishing at long distance, and outward the sweep of the wondrous lake with sand dunes sowing the shore with melancholy, or half inland again see the river moving meditatively toward the lake with its quiet meadows edging its quiet goings. Here the swallows skim and the birds build and rejoice, and the white clover and the full-sapped milkweed vie with each other in their donative of odors. There the pine-trees clump together in neighborly fashion and



whisper (sweet, sweet, their whisper is) together concerning sorrow they have shared together, and a crow flaps lazily along the sky to some lonely pines across the river. But I must not dally.

I am a fisherman. I must to my vocation; and I go down to where my boat is anchored in lush grasses and unmoor it, and trail my line in the water what time I row leisurely where the fishes ought to be. If they come not to me I go to them. And the lap of the water against the prow is delicious, and the wind from the lake drifts up stream like a wind taking holiday, and the waters are clear and dainty, and heaven leans and looks full-face into the stream. Do you own a boat, friend? Then you *are* rich. I feel poor no longer since this boat swung at the end of my rusty chain, and the oars across its breast were mine. And I forget to fish, but remember to dream, and the landscape is fair enough to be part of heaven, and the sky is utter blue and utter high, and the lake can be seen at a distance leaning over to look at me, and the sole pine-tree stands a sentinel of

sorrow. I am glad in my heart I came a-fishing. This is sport. But I am fishless—though that is a trifle not worth mentioning.

There is another affable way of fishing I have often practiced and which I can commend. *The modus operandi* is as follows: Take your pole across your shoulder, let the line dangle so the hook is free to catch in the limbs of the trees and bushes as you walk along. The extracting of the hook will occupy your hands; for "Satan finds some work for idle hands to do;" and so I always think it wise to leave the line dangle and keep my hands employed. This has saved me from many a snare. Thus fortified for the fishing voyage, I go boldly near a stream. I walk along its banks. I watch the shimmer on the stream, and the shadows flung in the waters by the banks. A bunch of white flags sometimes (and what lily-white blossoms these water-loving flags wear!) and sometimes a bank of sand touches the water, and is covered with bluebells which cast their lovely shadows in the stream. God is the first of the photographers. The smell of damp earth is in my nostrils, and the odor of the mints on which I walk. A bird flings across my face so that his wings almost touch me as he whirs by, and a redbird whistles as if he were joking with you. And the swallows circle with an almost musical motion, and the fair clouds lie listless as if absent on a day of quiet, and the hill climbs up from the stream's edge into a tangle of thicket and brier and moss, and the leap of some brave tree going toward the light with ragged branches, or a meadow smiles across the stream, and a woodland clouds with its green against the sky across the field. And I throw the rod down and forget it and wander smiling along as a pair of lovers, and gather flowers and find a red clover alone and gather it out of sheer courtesy, or surprise, or love (what matters which?). Or a bird's nest decoys me through the dark deeps of woods. And the stream laughs along. And you, looking at the sky, step unwittingly into its waters and like the souse of the water in your shoes. Fishermen of high grade are careless of wet feet; and besides, dew is in the thicket and on the grass, and drops from the trees, and how can you help having wet feet? And not to have them is to play at fishing. Let us be in earnest whatever we do. Let us not act at fishing; let us fish. I always do. Wade across the stream often if you can without total immersion. That will bring you into contact with the native element of fish, and may give you the smell of their scales; but you can get wet, and that is desirable, for you feel fishy and the feeling is the main thing in fishing. I follow the winding of the stream. I go and caress the

beech-tree as if it were a child, and the walnut-trees with their corrugated barks, and the silver bark of the birch. I talk to the birds that eye me slyly, calling them by name. I scramble up banks, and fall down hills—that is rare exercise. If I tear my trousers it gives me a positive feeling of self-respect, for so the acrobats do, and boys and fishermen; and to be of this company is honor enough to be sung by troubadours; but where are the fishing pole and the line with its pith and point? I laid them down, bless me I know not where. Forgetfulness is a sign of genius. Is it not glory enough to be born under the zodiacal sign of the fishes? But where is that pole? To go home fishless and poleless is like going to one's grave unwept. I will hunt that pole, but will *now* pause to eat a sandwich. A good man who fishes should always take a snack. It is sociable. You eat it yourself, and that has a radiant look of hospitality. If you go fishing alone (which is the real etiquette of fishing), it may seem selfish. But when you sit eating your lunch, that is sociable. Your self-respect and spirit of genuine generosity are now restored. There is a feeling of hospitableness when a lone fisherman fishes out of his pocket a lunch which he has filched (not to say fished) from his wife's cupboard. Besides, you feel self-sacrificing, for you are eating for two to keep up the idea of friendliness. And a lunch tastes good under such circumstances. I make my appeal to all candid men, if I am not speaking the truth when I say so. One combines business and pleasure and philosophy in a solitary lunch; and the better the lunch is the more business, philosophy, and pleasure there are. But where is the pole? That is a thing to consider; but deep thought is not conducive to good digestion, hence banish thought of the pole. Away,

base care! On with the lunch! Let hospitality be encouraged! There is yet a sliver of bread or a piece of chicken to be dealt with. On with the lunch! And a chipmunk standing inquiringly, and I may say impertinently on end (and I may say on the right end), looks inquiringly at my book and at my lunch and at me. I really have never settled the literary preferences of the chipmunk, though I think I could if I tried. A kingfisher dashes down to the river from a stump where he has been



sitting so sedately. I really suppose that seeing me eat has made him hungry. He will have his lunch too. But the light on the water is sweet to see, and the ripples run like laughter over the river's face, and the cattails not yet tailed stand sedately like folks at a funeral, and the blue of the sky is clouding for rain, and a drop from the cloud is on my face, and the gray sky is beautiful as a vision of the twilight—and where is the pole? I will leave a crust of bread and a chicken bone on the bank. The chipmunk has been neighborly, maybe he will like it; and I will throw some shreds of my lunch into the water as an offering to the fish. They have given me a rare morning. The line is not wet, but I am, and the fish have not been beguiled, for I have not grown vicious yet and baited my hook. But I'll be blessed if I know where the pole and the line and the hook are; and I will go and hunt them. And after a series of meanderings in mind I conclude they may be in one of seventeen places, which is a serious gain in the question of discovery and conclude them practically found now. I may be leisurely and gather wild roses and dainty ferns; and I sit down beside a wild flower devoutly as beside a woman, and wonder about its loneliness and loveliness, and if God knows it is there; and I walk in ripples of undulating grasses that hem the edge of the stream, and a phoebe plaints near me, and far across the river where the milk weeds grow and hang their ball blossoms, a hawk flies and flings his eager shadow on the water or on the meadow; for the sky has cleared and the rain cloud has forgotten its business and has gone a-gypsying with the wind. And here I go hunting for the fishing line. Strangely enough I was mistaken. It was not in any of the seventeen places, but *is* in the nineteenth. There it was sprawling indolently like a hobo in the shade with his dinner fragments beside him, with the flies upon him, and the blue bottles buzzing luxuriously around. But I stand with a sense of triumph. I have found the pole and line. Some people have poor memories. I pity them. There is no excuse for forgetting



where you left your things! And I have had great luck in fishing, and a great day of sport. "What luck?" say the people leeringly as I pass. "Fine," I answer bravely. "Where are the fish?" they insinuatingly ask. "I threw them back," I reply. So brave is truth. To refrain from catching the fish is the most delicate and generous way of throwing them back. The fish are there and truth is vindicated; and I go home with my heels on the ground, but my head in the sky and hang my day's fishing up with my fishing pole. And the rose is fragrant yet, and the trees cast their shadows across my face, and the river ripples and flashes brightly a perpetual pleasure. I am glad I went fishing, and had good luck.

*Sweet was the meadow scent,
And blue the sky,
When we a-fishing went,
My rod and I.*

*Cares staid at home in bed
While we went free;
And scurvy care is dead
To such as we.*

*Green was the summer land,
The air was balm;
Fair the bleak pine-trees stand;
My heart was calm.*

*Out on the river's rim,
My spirit sings
Roundels of praise to Him
Who summer brings.*

*So while fair morning drifts,
Fishing I go.
Down through the green wood's rifts
Warm sunlights glow.*

*Glad laughter takes my hand
And holds it tight,
As through this summer land
I stray till night.*



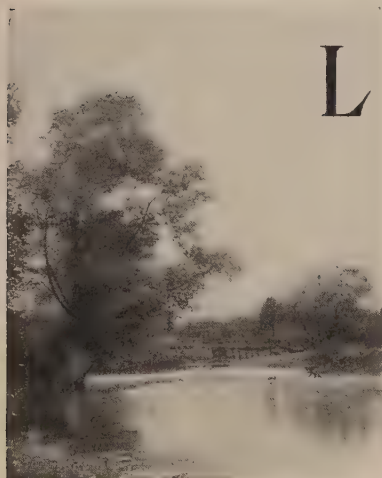
THE GOINGS OF THE WINDS



WHERE ZEPHYRS TOUCH THE WILLOWS



THE GOINGS OF THE WINDS



LIKE many another word freighted with beauty, this word "goings" comes from the Bible. Those old King James translators were poets to a man, which accounts for our Bible being both the classic of Hebrew literature and English literature. One translator gets the sense in a cold literality like a dead tree trunk; another suffuses his translation with poetry, as a tree is shaded by its own leaves. "When thou hearest the goings in the tops of the mulberry-trees" is a poet's way of telling a wind is blowing through tree tops. "Goings" are sound mixed with movement, the marching of the wind's

feet along the pathways of the tree tops; and what is or can be sweet!

I have often wondered if God could forget; whether he ever had obliviscent moods; whether any syllable ever fell out of his words as they do from ours; whether he ever could forget anything belonging to the calendar of beauty. I think he does not. Else how is every beautiful possibility present? In making the world God thought of everything ministrant to a blessed life. Can we think of any omitted mercy? Did he not put beauty in the green sward and in the blue sky? What colors could have been devised to rest the eyes and comfort the heart like this bewildering green upon the earth and this bewildering blue in the sky? Did he forget grace when he was making the cypress or pine, or the larch, or the quivering aspen, or the doughty oak, or the leaning willow? He could have made all

plants flowerless, as he did the ferns, or he could have dyed all flowers with one pigment, or he might have left odors out in compounding his flowers and leaves and grasses and earths; but thanks to his good Providence, he forgot not the sandalwood's clinging fragrance, nor the scents of roses and wheat stubble nor new-mown hay nor green walnuts, nor forgot to make dews at night, to distill odors from woodlands and plains, nor neglected that sweet inrush of earth and air smells which puffs in the face some unexpected morning and sings to the soul—Springtime! God ransacked his treasures when he made this world; nor was it in spirit of haste or obliviousness, when, on the day he finished the building of his world he said, "I have found all things good." If the wind fans a hot cheek to blow its fever out, or fills the flapping sails of innumerable ships, I count that to be a lesser blessing than its gift of touch and music. The wind's touch can be as tender as a loving woman's caress and its music as gentle and sweet as memories fetched from a happy past. To miss the blowing of the trumpets of the winds is to suffer loss. The wind's voices are inexpressible music. I love their laughter and their weeping, their wailing of autumn and their leaf-patter, like the sound of spring showers. I was reared in Kansas, where winds have what some esteem a vicious supremacy, but to me their trumpetings and stormy chargings to and fro, their shrill falsettos through leafless trees; their summer sweep, which wrecks the fleets of clouds as if they were ships blown on ragged ocean rocks; their whine at the casement, like a patient dog pleading for its master, and their wholly tender touch of a June evening wind—I love them all. Not one will I willingly leave out of my memory or deny room at the fireside of my life. They are part of me. It may be because my father's folk for unknown generations were sea captains and lovers of the raging waters, tempest-swirled and were all drowned at sea, that tempests are mixed with my blood and are part of my soul's dear possessions. But certain I am that winds do not vex me and that I am lonely apart from them as missing one of my home folks. Their ardor warms my spirit and their gentle quiet is like a call to prayer.

Jesus loved the winds, and, as I think, tore a scrap from the book of his boyhood when he said (he was thinking of Nazareth when he spoke), "The wind bloweth where it listeth"—those uncertain, unmannerly, brusque winds, which betimes whipped up Esdraelon's loitering

valley from the Great Sea, or on occasion springing with sudden passion out of the Jordan Valley over the Nazareth cliffs toward the far and fair blue waters. Could Jesus forget them? On many a solemn night, alone but not lonely, he had sat with chin upon his hands and listened to his hill winds blow. The winds—and he made them! Think of that, my heart. His winds—now thine. And when the sea was whipped with tempests by the lashings of the winds the wild and boisterous waves disturbed him not only in dreams, he thought he heard the heavenly bugles blow, and wakened from his happy sleep when the scared disciples wailed above the wind's wild "goings," "Carest thou not if we perish?" Then he awoke and spake lovingly to the winds (no harshness in his voice nor threat upon his face) saying only, "Keep still for a little while, your fury frightens *them*, keep still. Peace, be still," and the winds threw their brazen trumpets in the sea and were still. He loved the winds; and all their sobbing lutes and viols and 'cellos were dear to him.



THUNDERHEAD

How I have rejoiced in God's winds! Under Niagara, when the winds have blown fury blasts, and on the mountains, when the snows had loosened their garments at the throat for freer wrestling and where down some long cañon winds swept like vernal freshets, and up among melancholy pines, where every pine was as a chief musician, like Asaph

in his ancient choir, and on bare plains, where only the surly sage brush leaned prone before the gale, and on lakes, where water tumbled like romping children when the winds frisked with them in gay moods of laughter and romping, or when the winds were in outrageous anger and plowed the fair waters with the share of the hurricane, and in forests, where the paths are narrow and very dim and shadows are many and sunshine rare—O the goings of the winds in such a wood when leaves flutter, as half in dream, and the sound sobs like remote surf, and winds pass still,

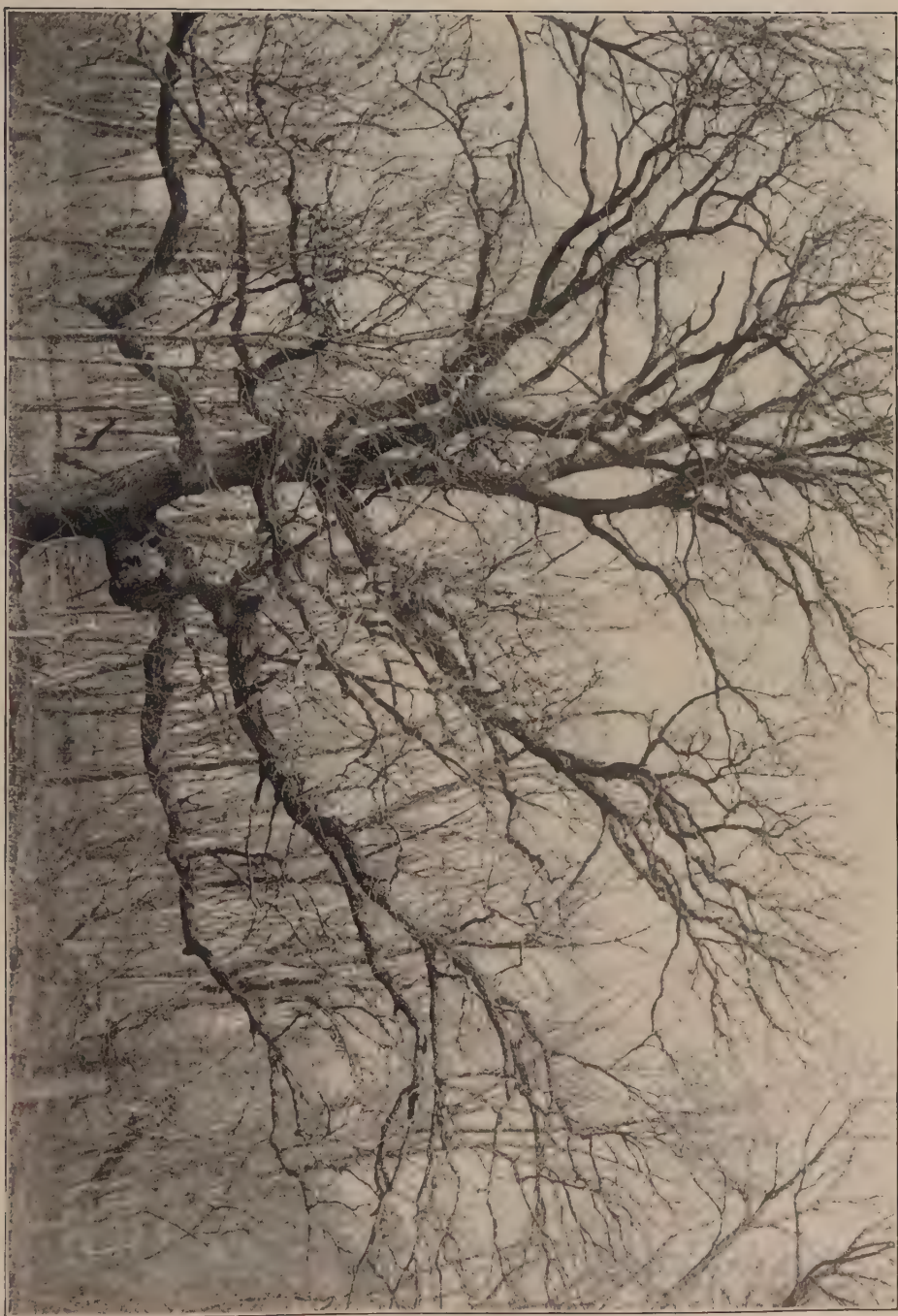
*"Fainter onward. like wild birds that change
Their season in the night and wait their way
From cloud to cloud,"*



THE SURF

mixes honey with ocean winds and rocks lean darkly over Spanish Head, fruitful of shipwrecks, and against whose sword edges Philip's fleet proved but a feeble jest—on such headlands have I heard the winds and gloried in their tumults as in the coming of a friend; and many a night have I walked steamer decks to watch the marching stars and hear the regurgitations of multitudinous waves a-sobbing; or in winter in the city, when cold winds keyed their voices to distress like beggars gaunt and cold, and shrieked like despair which had forgotten laughter, when the thin-clad and well-clad hurried home as half afraid, and children play indoors, and snows whip up alley-ways and down crowded half-quieted streets (seeing a storm makes its own calm), and down chimneys with singing like a last minstrel, or spits in your face like an indignant beggar to whom you have refused charity, or tender summer winds which stray down where long marsh grasses grow in hearing of the sea.

and on headlands of the old sad ocean, where Mount Desert rocks, bannered with pine-trees fronted by the sea (rocks naked as the strength of death) or on headlands of the Golden Gate fronting burning sunsets and the far and barren reaches of the affable Pacific, and on cliffs of the Isle of Mona, where heather



IN BATTLE MOOD

How I love the dim wind on the wide water; but as for that, what wind do I not love, and for what one do I not listen, whether singing a quiet song or trumpeting in Titan anger; whether it is gentle touch, like a beloved hand upon our sleeping cheek, or cruel and vindictive, like a Scythian—nay, I can not deny that I love them all.

What musicians winds are! They are, in truth, the only musicians. All voices, whether human or blown from instruments, or shocked from



A PATCH OF CLOVER WHERE SPRING WINDS LINGER

wild waves that hammer on the rocks, what are they save the blowing of the winds? Lowell says

"The organ blows its dream of storm,"

and no more accurate word has ever been spoken regarding organ music, which is the wind blowing across the reeds. I have sat in cathedrals in the lowering dusk and felt the organ blow its gathering gale about my spirit. The organ was the wind of God. The Devas play:

*"We are the voices of the wandering wind
Which moan for rest and rest can never find,"*

and they are sad

"As sunset in a land of reeds,"

and very full of meaning. In an elect moment, Whittier made music for the winds to make their meaning clear:

*"Yet on my cheek I feel the western wind,
And hear it telling to the orchard trees,
And to the faint and flower-forsaken bees,
Tales of fair meadows green with constant streams,
And mountains rising blue and cold behind
Where in moist dells the purple orchis gleams,
And starred with white the virgin's bower is twined.
So the o'erwearied pilgrim as he fares
Along life's summer waste, at times is fanned
Even at noontide by the cool, sweet airs
Of a serener and a holier land."*

And winds laded with odors—you can not escape their sweet comradeship. And winds blowing across a field where haycocks exhale fragrance, who can escape their witchery? Such winds know how to spoil waters and fields and forests of spikenards and balsams. I have inhaled fragrance from winds blown fresh from the sea through moors of purple heather, and can I forget the poetry of it even in heaven? I pray I may not.

Winds of spring, apple-scented and with earth-smell in them! And walking through woods at night when dew drips from the leaves and the score or more of odors saturate the air, and the frog's song sings up from marshes and ravines as if that were audible odor, and starlight plays hide-and-seek with you through the foliage, when there puffs in your face the musk of many odors mixed, then you could catch the Wind and kiss her on the cheek like a girl, for sheer delight. Then when lilacs blow, and spring hastens on to June and white clover chokes the air with heavy perfumes, and roses tell in the dark where they are blooming by the fragrance they lent the breeze as it strayed indolently through their dear delights, or later, when harvests spill their essences to the languorous winds, and later still, when winds bear their sad freightage of autumn leaves falling, or fallen, and faded. O the wind is the poet laureate of autumn; and the lonely, tearful music and autumnal fragrance of leaf-distilled perfumes fairly drug the senses of the spirit till perforce the winds make us poets against our will and reason.

In one of Hosea Biglow's pastoral preludes (bless him who wrote them and gave us Hosea!) is a touch of genius in discriminating odors. "Mr. Wilbur sez to Hosea, 'Wut's the sweetest smell on

airth?' 'Noomone hay,' sez I, pooty bresk, for he was allus hankerin' 'round in hayin'. 'Nawthin' of the kine,' sez he. 'My leetle Huldy's breath,' sez I ag'in.' 'You're a good lad,' sez he, his eyes sort of riplin' like, for he lost a babe onc't about her age—the best of perfooms is just fresh air, *fresh* air,' sez he, emphysizin', 'athout no mixture.'" And that is worth thinking of. All odors the winds bear are defective as compared with the utter freshness of the moving airs themselves. "Jest fresh air,"—what an exhilarant that is. Drinking water spouting fresh from mountain snow drifts, and the blowing of clean air in the face, and the making your prayer to God when life grows hard or glad—are not these apart from all things else and allow of no comparisons. Similes are lifeless here. And the breath of a wind after a rain! Wind is unspeakable for music and odors. What a happy fate to be associated with such recollections. If man or woman might hope in coming years, when far beyond the sight of eyes or hearing of the ears, to stay sweet memories in hearts which could not forget them, what could human heart ask more? And I have known such folks. The mention of their names makes me think of sunlit fields. All sweet things lie adjacent to their personalities, just as trees and shade and gurgling brooks and trailing clouds and sublime solitudes and what seems the ragged frontiers of the world lie adjacent to huge mountains.

Winds are fortunate to be the carriers of aromas and music; to come freighted with the lilac's breath and the happy voices of happy women's laughter. But I do not hesitate to confess that the rarest wind I have ever experienced is blown from Kansas prairies on summer twilights. About midway in Kansas, east and west, is this wind in perfection. Nothing equals it. I have loved winds blown from briny seas and from the emerald deserts of great lakes and the St. Lawrence dreaming northward like a drifting ship, and from Alp and Sierra, and my belief still holds that for unutterable tenderness, part wind, part spirit, for poetry whose threads can never be unbraided, these Kansas



A SINGING BROOK

June prairie winds have not any competitor. This may be the love of my lifetime veering my judgment, though I incline to believe this is the judgment of a balanced and an equal mind. The prairie wind, as I tell you, has a witchery quite beyond the telling of any man. There have I walked along the shores of summer twilight as on the shores of blue and beautiful Galilee, and caressing, like an angel's hand, went the dear wind, and in it a voice, half whisper and half dream, its touch, like the shadow-touch of a fond hand passing across you, yet scarcely touching you; the hush, and after that the slow streaming wind, like a breath from heaven upon a pilgrimage across the spaces, so remote its origin appeared; and journeying not any whither, yet everywhere and in no haste, loverlike loving to linger for another kiss—such a wind withal as one might love to have kiss him on the face that evening, when, after a long journey, with bleeding feet, he walked in through some postern gate out on the fields of heaven sown to asphodels, and dim lights and violets and immortelles. Such is the twilight summer wind in Kansas when the prairie grasses stoop a little to let the zephyrs by. To feel this necromancy once is worth a pilgrimage; seeing it will endure among the luculent recollections of a happy life.

*"The wind to-night is cool and free,
The wind to-night is westerly,
Sweeping in from the plains afar,
Sweet and faint.
My thoughts to-night are far and free,
My thoughts to-night are westerly;
Sweeping out on the plains afar,
Where roses grow and grasses are.
My heart to-night is wild and free,
My heart to-night is westerly,"*

—JOHN NORTHERN HILLIARD.

George Macdonald has felt the heavenly hill-winds blow:

*"O wind of God that blowest in the mind,
Blow, blow and wake the gentle spring in me;
Blow, swifter blow, a strong, warm summer wind,
Till all the flowers with eyes come out to see,
Blow till the fruit hangs red on every tree."*

Blow, wind of God!



THE FALLS OF ST. CROIX





WHENCE THE SPRINGS FLOW

THE FALLS OF ST. CROIX



THOUGH not an artist, I sit down in hearing of the laughter of running water to paint a picture. The commonest artists may attempt the fairest landscape, which may seem to justify this present attempt. The place is the falls of the St. Croix; though I would have you forget the village and remember the place. Yet, scarcely that, for in the air last night swung the sweet cadences of a church bell, a music not to be heard lightly or without reverence, whether in crowded city or in solitary hamlet, or on far mountain side; for what minds of God, in an instant, without effort, reaches the sublime. However, forget the village, save its swinging church bell, and remember only the place where the river falls and runs away.

I am attracted by the river's name. There was a touch of the poet in those old French voyageurs. And if they were Jesuits, as was so often the fact, religion mixed with their poetry; and discovery was their poetry as hymns were the poetry of George Herbert and Keble; and they starred the way they discovered by their "saints" and a quaint and touching festival of names, making their discoveries one long pilgrimage to Jerusalem. This river, some forgotten lover of the cross named St. Croix, and the name puts me to prayer. For which cause, seeking some solitude where I might "knit up the raveled sleeve of care," I chose this; and the name did not deceive me. I am glad I came. The river is not what it once was, for rivers miss their youth as age does,



and their stature abates with the passage of years. The tilled lands grow thirsty and drink like a sweaty harvester, and so exhaust the fountains which used to flow into the rivers. The gains of our largest civilization are touched with loss. Many of the pines have been taken, only a few are left to tell survivors of another era, what sort of day was theirs. At this point on the St. Croix, the banks are tall so as to leap to the dignity of hills. There is no room for tillage near the river's bed, and so the dusty road and the cottage, where love leans above its cradle, and the woods with their hidden tinkle of cow bell and a mill, where crystal waters of a boisterous brook turn the wheel, as if such labor were a jest,—these are my fellow-citizens at the falls of St. Croix.

Here the river runs from north to south, with barely a quiver of the compass, only curving a little, as streams must. The valley dims upon the eye, at either extreme hid in a cloud of trees, southward, northward. The backlands stand somberly in the distance. Knobs of hills are sentineled by pine-trees ragged as Spanish soldiers. The crests of the ridges against the west are one uninterrupted forest, in whose shadow insects drone in undisturbed quiet and violets blow with no one to pick them. To the east is a zigzag line of hills, indented here and there by an intruding valley or a road with its smoke of dust. On a sudden, a point of green hills shoots up like the tangled leap of some emerald fountain, and this hill catches and holds sunlight when the valley thinks the sun has set. A dusty road ambles along the river's brink like some loitering lad; and along this a wagon rattles or a carriage clatters, or a workman stoops with a lunch pail empty in his hand, or the woman and her lover linger in the dusk, or a little child with bare feet patters in the dust or wades in the clear stream edging the road with its indescribable loveliness, and the wind "shakes from the trees the dust of day," as Victor Hugo has it.

This retreat reminds me of New England hills, which always appeal to me as a loveliness almost unapproachable. In New England hills is a redundancy of moss and ferns and grasses and deep oozy earth, and deep chalices in which the waters rest from motion, obscured from

sight, and hidden alleys down which the waters pass with a stealthy step, so that you may pass and repass and not know that you and the brook are neighbors,—such a confederation of beauty, entrancing as autumn when it frequents the hills, is all but without competitor. This St. Croix region more nearly reaches this faroff beauty than Rocky Mountain or Sierra or any place I have lit on in my Western wanderings. Here the St. Croix falls down a gorge with multitudinous music. What in old times was perchance a falls is now a turbulent rapids, but is spend-thrift in music; and what more could we require? and I love, sleeping lightly with head at the window so as to miss no music when I wake, if



THE WALLED ROCKS

but for a moment (and the waters seem scarcely disquieted, the rapids being not turbulent now nor precipitous) to hear the voices as if an angel shook music from his mantle. The bed and banks of the river are a red granite worn by the polishing of the waters smooth as the polished shaft which tells where lies some blessed sleeper dead, but not forgotten. So polished are these rocks you must step with watchfulness or lame you for your carelessness. Knots of rocks stand in the current of the stream like some sturdy spirit in turbulent wars when others have forgotten to be brave. Some of the wall rocks on the bank are yellow as ocher; and against these dash crests of spray as the stream foams

down the rapids betimes and flashes up as a spirit in prayer, or as touching the old rock out of compassion for its eternal quiet or out of sport and raillery, I know not which.

I lie under a ragged cedar on the eastern bank. Its shadows and odors are a tent, and its leaning branches brush my face when the wind stirs, and its odors house me in their sacred balsam. The winds sing lazily through the trees and touch the quiet cedars into indolent motion, and the aspen near by dances its every leaf as with some apocalypse of joy; and the locust sends his strident call through the woods and across the stream; and a solitary killdeer shrills his plaintive call as he races from pool to pool on the river's brink; and the wren chatters in wren dialect, screened from inquisitive eyes, or the bluejay calls hoarsely, "I am—I am here—here—here," as if everybody was interested in that information, and the wind blows in my face with a breath as of early winter, refreshing as it comes from mountain streams; and I lie and read Lowell, and am pensive and yet glad. I am reading the search for the singing leaf,

*"And deep through the green-wood rode he
And asked of every tree,
O if you have ever a singing leaf
I pray you give it me.
And the trees all kept their counsel,
And never a word said they
Only, there sighed from the tree-tops
A music of seas far away."*

And with such an afternoon in such a place the world draws off like a defeated army,—far off, where it seems not so much as be. The sun



PINES, RAGGED AS SPANISH SOLDIERS

changes the position of shadows of rock and cedar and flings handfuls of sunshine in my face out of sheer joy and sportiveness. The insects whine drowsily (though they mean no music), and the voice of St. Croix Falls sings on like a minstrel whose voice never grows husky nor weary, nor his hands tired of the harp he holds and thrums.

And when the day snuffs out his light and falls asleep, the river sings on. In the day there were other voices; now the river sings alone. The voice of the waters is full of sorrow, like the story of a broken heart. Sometimes the note seems to me like a dying man who makes signs, beckoning you near with a world of intention in his eyes, draws your ear close to his lips, tries to frame lips to the words his heart would speak, but at the best his words are incoherent and he dies with his secret unrevealed or half revealed. So these waters. Their voices are, as says Longfellow:

"Full of hope and yet of heart-break;"

but seem to cry, "Hear my story, hear, hear my story!" And at night, when other voices hush their jargon, then the waters have their way. Their day is night; and they catch stars in their tangle of waters and blur their light and seem to say, "This hour is mine," and send up their mournful voices like incense through the darkness. How sweet it is to hear the music of waters come through the lattices of your sleep and dreams! I leave my window open and draw the bed-head close to the window-ledge, so that in my score of wakings in the night each tone of the singing waters may tell its story of lament; and I whisper, "I thank you for your melody," and fall into slumber again.

Nor is this all the St. Croix can offer, though this is much, and enough to change summer into a holiday. The stream's voice suffices to change turmoil into quietness, and make room for the ineffable presence of the Christ of God. Along the eastern acclivities running southward from the falls, spring after spring gushes out. You can not make an inventory of them. They baffle you. Every bank has its fountain, and I sit thus and write of them with the voices of these waters on every side. One bubbles with a boyish self-assurance; another sounds like a harp heard afar; another has haunting notes, quiet and tender as a melody half-forgotten, so that I am compassed about with music. Every mossy bank is a cluster from which nature is squeezing crystal wines. Here are moss, and fern, and shrub, and violet leaves, flowerless now, but reminiscent, all huddled here in quiet and hidden neighbor-

liness. Some places, the silver of the stream gushes a fountain which glasses the hillside and the far-off sky. How it clatters like a busy street, or laughs cheerily like some sunshiny heart, and runs over pebbles, saying, "I go—but I tell not whither," and stays not a moment; for the hill is steep, but running like one who hears a friend calling, fills its woodland path with merry voices leaving sweet echoes when itself is gone, and a memory in my heart more lasting than these echoes in this shady wood. Other rivulets hide themselves as in modesty. You



SUNRISE ON THE RIVER

can not see whence they come; but they are come. Invisible threads of silver are braided to make this rivulet, and it whispers along its way, and if you will hear its voices you must lean down on the mossy bank it loves, lean and grow glad; for sweet as a child's kiss in the sleepy night is the voice of this silver thread of waters. Such dainty minstrelsy I have not heard since I lay in New England hills. One thing only is lacking here, just one; these brooks do not lose themselves in a tangle of roots and grasses, and then dash out suddenly a sweet surprise; but covetous would he be who would demand more than is here. The

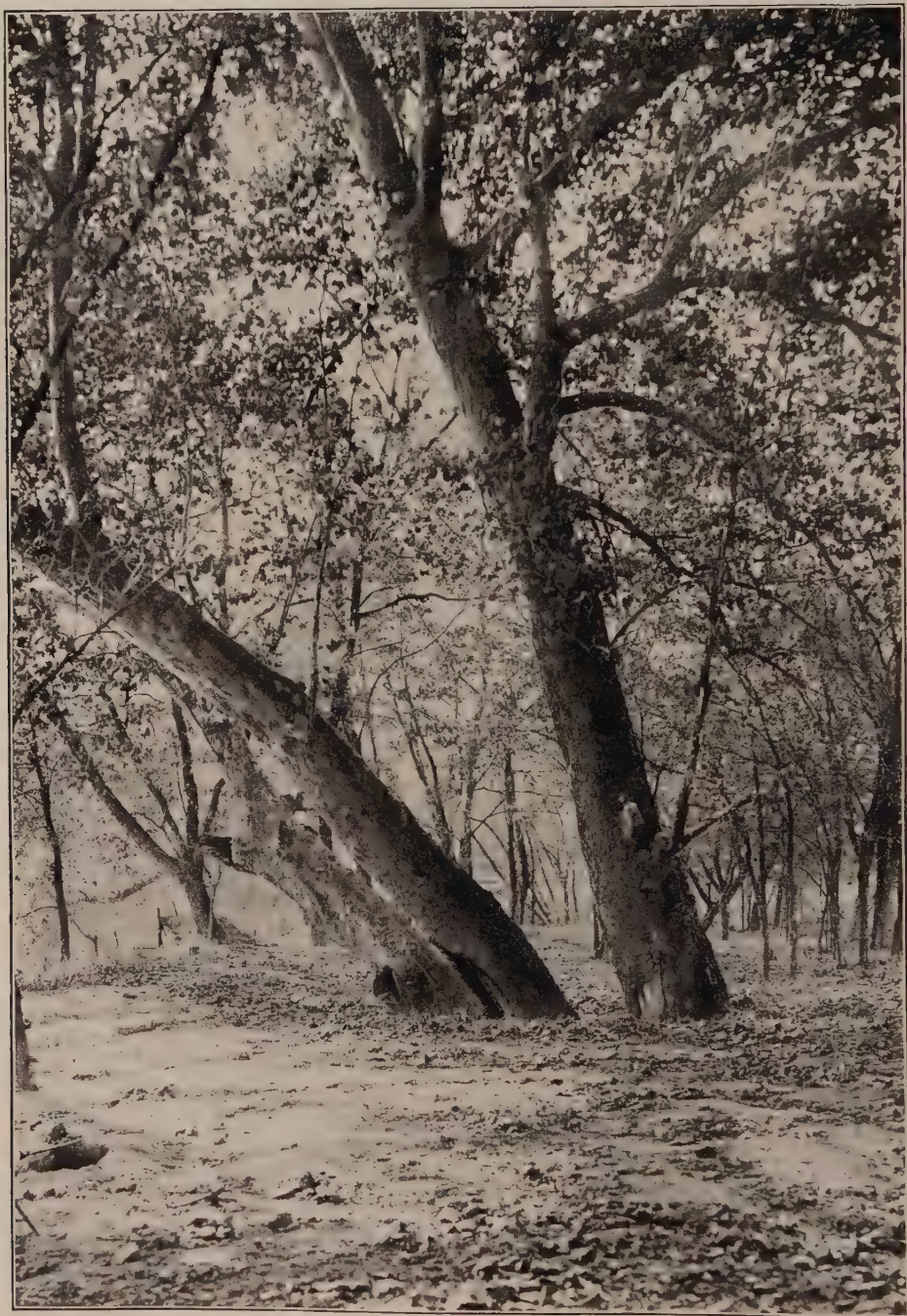
morning walks across the sky, and all these sunlit hours, these limpid rivers saturate the woods with their music. All about you is the voice of the lute of the rivulet; and each voice seems sweetest. This is God's glade, and these rivulets are a troop of his minstrels, and this long day, too brief by many hours (for it is noon — for it is afternoon — why it is evening)! I have been heart to heart with God; for these are God's woods, and streams, and ferns, and sturdy rocks, and river banks, and drowsy winds caught in the thickets, and dainty waterfalls trembling on eminences or precipices of pebble or root, and laughter of eddies — and all are parts of God's thoughtfulness for us whose weariness slips away in the heaven of his solitudes.



THE OTHER SHORE

WHEN AUTUMN FADES





WHEN AUTUMN FADES

WHEN AUTUMN FADES

*When autumn fades, and from the windy hill
And forest glades beside the quiet rill
The splendors waste; and all the happy trees
Are quite defaced of beauty, and the breeze*

*Makes deep lament with laughter quite forgot,
As it were meant for threnody and not
For merry mood: and when the blackbirds fling
Their dusky brood across the sky on wing*

*Toward fields remote, and wild ducks flying high
With muffled note make speed across the sky,
And redbirds blaze through naked loneliness
Of woodland ways: and full of deep distress*

*The moaning trees where beat tumultuous tides
Of angry seas whose stormy music chides:
And all the ways are sown with withered leaves
And all the days are dim with haze, and grieves
The wintry wind, and the year's evening shades
Grow dusk, and blind the storms: when autumn fades.*



A WALK ALONG A RAIL- ROAD IN JUNE





A WALK ALONG A RAILROAD IN JUNE



THE season was mid-June. The region was a prairie. The place was a five-mile stretch of railroad running eastward, undeviatingly as the flight of an arrow. Landing at a village in the early morning, with three hours to wait for my train, the out-of-doors challenged me to walk to the next hamlet; and, my custom being never to take a dare from nature if my employment will allow me leisure, I swung out right gayly to answer the challenge. The day was dustless, rains having sprinkled field and road and gardens quite recently; the skies were dimmed with a veil of cloud not dense enough to obscure the

sun nor to dim the blue completely, but enough to calm the sunlight into entire pleasantness for a walk like mine. A pleasant wind blew from the east and kept the track unhesitatingly as a locomotive, while I, with the butterflies and wild bees, drifted from side to side as flowers and grasses and tangle of vines invited me.

Now, a railroad is what our friend Ruskin railed at with his delightful spleen; and the logic of his complaint was that the railroad stood for utility and John Ruskin stood for nature, and what John Ruskin stood for was what should be. Ruskin had all the sweet dogmatism and self-confidence of a little child. I like his love of field and flood; more still, I love it, but scarcely enjoy his vituperation, though put into English sweet enough to make even scolding charming, nor enjoy it at all when he raves against those modern appliances which have changed the economic world and us, from provincials into cosmopolites. And



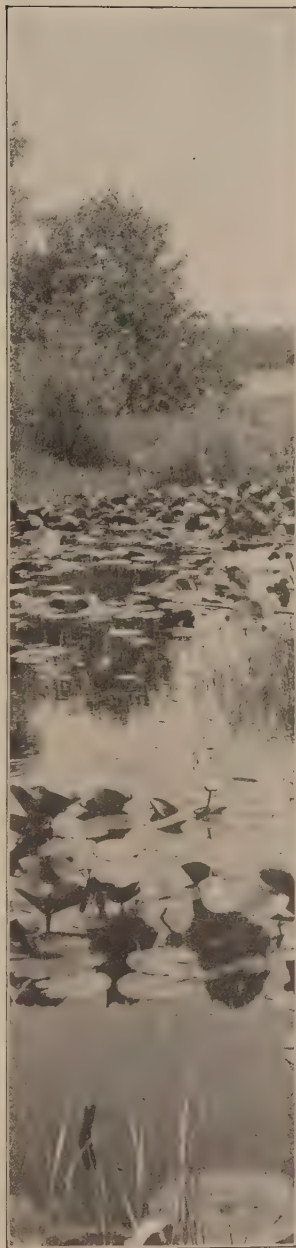
beyond this, use is needful as beauty, and more needful, if all the truth be told. Use and beauty must not be thought of as enemies, but friends. The cooking stove is quite as essential as clematis. They cherish no antipathy. Use is lacking in the picturesque; but drudgery must needs be for the world's bettering. A railroad, while anything but beautiful, is the chore-boy of civilization, the stevedore that carries our burdens from wharf to wharf and from hold to dock, and with prospect of neither emolument nor delight serves all save itself. Such service, free-handed and free-hearted, always compels my regard. I half venerate it, as I do a mother of many children, whose hands are worn to scars and hardness by much toiling for the ones she loves. Who serves, God loves. The road gives its wealth of labor as uncomplainingly as a mother to her daughter. Let no jest nor sneer be directed toward those whose sweaty shoulders bend to the burden of world's work; let us rather requite such sturdy toil with appreciation which is better far than gold. The railroad track is to me the embodiment of uncomplaining, unacknowledged toil whose praises are in nobody's mouth.

However, I have found that if the railroad is itself lacking in beauty, it affords shelter for the beautiful. Any one who has been much out of doors in our later days, knows



how beauty of tangled thicket and room for gathering of bloom and bird are growing rarer; for are not the straggling fences rotting down and giving place to fences of wire, which leave no least protection from grazing herd or flock, or tramping foot, for brier, or clump of grasses or blackberry, with its arch of vine and sweet, blinding surprise of snow-white blossoms? But all this shelter the railroad supplies, and calls to the homeless garden of nature, "I will give you room," and makes good this cordial invitation. On either side of the track is a goodly breadth given over to nature. A ditch dug in building the road-bed gives place for water to stand, and where water stands there is invitation for flag and cat-tail and swamp-grasses; and the embankment gives privilege for the wild rose to hold tryst with the wild bee, and makes banks leaning south, where in the new springtime violets may stand in pools of blue, and grasses may grow, unafraid of the lowing herd. If you, friend, have never known how dear a shelter the barren railroad affords nature's refugees, pray you give the matter heed.

Five miles of invitation of perfumed June lie before me. The last robin of my journey calls with its flute-note from the fringes of the village. He hugs the town, I fear me, over-much, and I tremble lest his morals become corrupted; but he eyes me from his barn-roof with a curious look, as if commiserating the moneyless traveler who must plod along the track instead of riding on the train or going on a robin's speeding wings. If men are not small folks in the bird's eyes, I miss my guess. They have a right to feel aristocrats, who have wings and know how to fly. The skies are fair highways for treading; and I piously envy all winged things. Sometimes, I fear I love the country



more than is comely, and then I recall I do not love it so much as God does and am content. My march this fair morning was as a king's triumph, all royal things coming to meet me. The soft winds sweet with rose perfumes welcomed me with a kiss full on the mouth; vines reached out their graceful tendrils my way; a meadow-lark called to me from a nodding red clover head; a quail invisible, hid somewhere in meadow or hedgerow, piped in his cheerful voice across a cornfield as if to intimate he was where he had full right to be; the talkative sparrows chatted along the way, having their say about the traveler going past with his arms full of flowers; a single blackbird with his hot crimson epaulets flung by me as in high dudgeon, though I had done him no earthly harm. This way is poor in birds, much to my regret, and I know not why. Blackbirds should have been here in garrulous multitudes. Plovers I looked for and found none. I think perhaps this is a bird's holiday and they are gone from home, for certainly they are not here, and the day is fair and belongs to them. But vegetation there was a fortune of. The spring had latter rains, and all things had the brilliancy of perpetuated youth upon them. Leaves fairly flashed in the light, as if sparks were smitten from them. Long miles of grasses, rank and lush, grew nodding to the wind. On either side were fields planted to corn, with the farmers plowing the long rows of emerald; or pastures of prairie grass, than which few sights are fairer to the eyes; or red clover fields lent modest perfume to the air, for few odors can compare in delicacy with those wafted from the red clover meadow, so delicate that unless the flowers are in masses of acres in breadth, you will not get the fragrance at all. Fields of oats with their quick green answered to the wind, and a wheatfield with a faint haze of harvest on it felt the goings of the spring wind. Woods, there were none. Only a willow stooped across a ravine showing where was hidden water, or a planted elm waved its graceful curved plumes, or a cottonwood, which tree I profess to love and have some times talked, some times written my affection, not being content with a single declaration. One cottonwood I stop to listen to—and indeed what one of them do I not stop to listen to?—for the rain upon their roof is very sweet to me, and their tearful commotion is something my heart always remembers. This tree stood along a field edge lifting its deep green into the air in a manly fashion, as unashamed to front the sky, and through its branches ran the drift of autumn rain, and I closed my eyes and listened, as loath to pass; and farther off, half across a field, a group stood together where I could



THE LEANING WILLOW

hear, as they half whispered their rainy colloquies. Spring it was, or early summer, but they, as I gathered, were speaking about autumn and the sere leaf and the last late rose and the departure of the swallows—and who could blame them for having tears in their voices?

I made my leisure journey. Naught troubled me nor hasted me. The time was God's and summer's and mine. I stopped at every pastoral and grew inquisitive at every stop. Something enticed me everywhere. Three hours I had, though I could use three days. One can not have too much leisure with Nature. She is coy like a hermit thrush, so that those who hasten may not know her; but I sped leisurely. Most plants along the road I knew, some I had not seen, or, speaking exactly, one, and that made me glad, because it is so good to make a new friend among the flowers. One's life is infinitely enriched thereby. To meet old friends in flowers or folk is delightful, and meeting new folk and flowers has a tang of gladness also. One new friend among birds or flowers, or gentle green among the leaves—what think you of that, my heart? One white flower I met this day I had not met aforetime, and the memory of its dainty beauty lingers caressingly. Five-petaled, pure white as a blackberry blossom, growing low on the earth, beckoning the wind, sheltered by the grasses, sometimes a few feet of ground would be star-white with them, sometimes one bloomed solitary like a forgotten life some one had died and left, but whether single or in groups, the flower was dainty, fair, and left a gentle memory to my heart. I see it yet. Along the track were no rose bushes with their frowsy archings and interarchings, and had there been, the time of roses was not yet. That sweetness was to be an anticipation. Not all flowers bloom at once. God is too good for that. He sows his flowers through all the lanes of spring, summer, autumn; and I love him for it. But, rose bushes being absent, rose blooms were present and burned along the banks or flamed in the grasses like sparks from a hurrying engine. They were inexpressibly beautiful. My eyes caressed them, and I would linger over every flushed face I saw, as if it were the last I was to set eyes upon. Seldom more than six to nine inches high, they took you by surprise—by a sweet surprise; and they were always fair, running in color from pure white to deep crimson, each seeming, as I saw it, fairer than its sister, as each child in a family circle. Here a single flame shot like a firefly's lamp, there a bank blushed into sudden flame with them. One was white sprinkled daintily with pink, another was bronzed as with some chaste enamel, another pink as a

seashell, so delicate you feared to look straight at it lest the blush die away to be seen no more. I wished I were painter so as to paint them all; but could I? And the buds, ready for flowering, were fairer than the flower, and had moss upon them, so that I thought I had found a colony of God's moss roses growing wild. When spring comes round and the dwarf roses bloom, go you, good friend, and watch for them as for the coming of a longed-for comrade; and bring some of the loveliest away with you and and press them in a book, and write in the book where you found them, their color, when you gathered them, and their

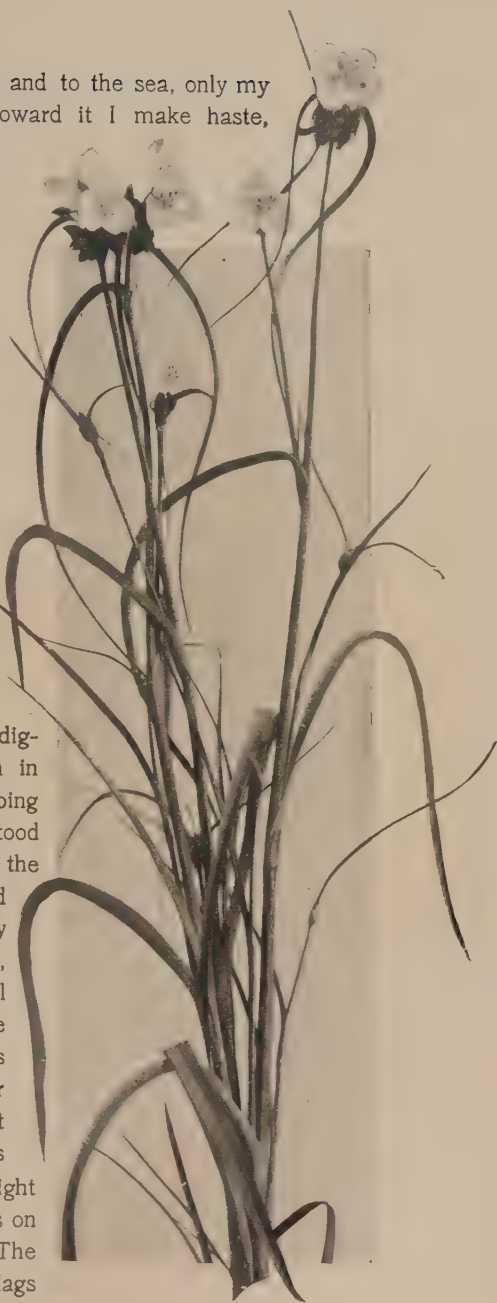


THE BRIDGE

sweet capricious ways, and confess you love them, whereat, mayhap, they may learn to love you in return—who knows? For a mile and more along the banks the wild parsnip was swaying to the touch of every wind—whorls of gold was what they were—and looking across a mile of them was looking at a pathway of wrought gold, and who was I, to walk on gold-paved streets before my time, or to stand, as sometimes I did, when the flowers stood tall, in golden corridors? Once, just once, a rivulet crossed the path. I saw it glint among the grasses and come slyly closer, like some living thing filled with curiosity, and then it ran under our bridge as one affrightened, but the water was clear and intent on its journey. If I spoke to it in passing, it either heard not, or, if hearing, made no reply, nor even gave a backward look. Perhaps its reticence was to hide ignorance, for perchance it knew not whither it was going, only knowing it was time to haste like a truant child overtaken by the dark; and I cried, "You are going to the sea," but no word did it reply, only there was audible laughter such as I loved to listen to; and I seemed to be bent on talking to the rivulet, for I said, "You are

sweet capricious ways, and confess you love them, whereat, mayhap, they may learn to love you in return—who knows? For a mile and more along the banks the wild parsnip was swaying to the touch of every wind—whorls of gold was what they were—and looking across a mile of them was looking at a pathway of wrought gold, and who was I, to walk on gold-paved streets before my time, or to stand, as sometimes I did, when

journeying, but I too am journeying, and to the sea, only my sea is shoreless and remote, and toward it I make haste, though oftener I fear with tears than with laughter. Yours is the better way, laughing onward toward the sea." I crossed a group of shrubs unknown to me, whose leaves were of such redness as to stand like a dull flame in the midst of the gay greenery of the grasses that hedged them in. And the slough grasses are always beautiful to my eyes. I never yet have tired of them, and here they grew in eager luxuriance, and in some parts were of such brilliant green as if they had barely wakened from a refreshing winter sleep, and with all freshness on them, like a newly awakened child, looked at you in sweet surprise. The grasses, grown taller, had a sedateness and sense of dignity such as I have sometimes seen in women. Stately they were and drooping—all bowed as soldiers who had stood guard all night and were sleeping in the day. The wind came and caressed them, but they woke not or barely nodded as if saying, "Let me sleep, let me—" and the sleepy voice fell asleep. They were secret-keeping like marsh grasses by the sea. I love this waving green when winds drowse or flurry by, and the grass, somnolent yet fluent, answered in a dream to this fond caress, and I feared the winds might disturb their rest; and the slumber was on them when the wind was gone. The crowning glory of the walk was the blue flags



(spiderwort). They and I were old friends, though I had never known them in such profusion, for they stood for two miles and more in solid ranks on both sides the track. You do not know how beautiful the blue flag is till you have seen it in such long procession. Standing alone, this flower has a gawky appearance, and when seen in small groups this awkwardness is not materially lessened; but when seen in their armies, where on looking back they drift like blue smoke lying low along the ground and for miles—then they are a pageant of beauty and color. I gathered them till I could carry no more, but gathered them all in my heart. Not a blue flag nodded on its stem when my love had passed by. I see the mass of color and delight as I write, as I did the day I walked in the midst as if I were crowned king of all that excellence; and I mistake, if for all the days of my life I shall not feel as if on a day in June I had walked in a royal procession. To see that blue muster in the early summer was worth going mile on mile to see. The violets had put their lights out weeks ago, and here is a flower that holds its bloom aloft like clustered stars of blue, as if violets clustered on the umbels. You must keep close to the ground to see a violet; but these flowers hang their blue aloft like a light and there, shines blue as the midoceans. There they stand, sometimes like soldiers in ranks ready for war, sometimes they spring suddenly out of the dense green of the swamp grass I have told you of, and you see no stalk of flower at all, only a green sea waking from sleep into amethyst with downy centers blue as the petals are and each pistil dipped in a pot of gold dust.

One thing I found this day I had never found before, and that was a pure white flag with snow-white center and the pistil tipped with gold. The beauty of it fairly took my breath. That day I had seen flags of every hue of blue, from light sky blue to the black blue of ocean, and some with only a haze of blue, faint, delicate, remote as if the color were an afterthought; but this blue flag blooming cloud-white was quite beyond me. So is God always and still always surprising us.

But down the track behind me I see a cloud of smoke. My holiday I plainly see is ended. My train is coming and is no laggard. I must leave this long journey of gladness, though loath as ever sailor to quit the sea. I have had a journey in the land of dreams, so fair they were. I had walked down a five-mile stretch of railroad, and it had been as if I had wandered inland across the hills of God.

THE WINDINGS OF A STREAM





BETWEEN HIGH BANKS

THE WINDINGS OF A STREAM



STREAMS are poor geometers and are in ill repute with rigid mathematicians. The mathematician has engaged himself to and married the straight line; and a straight line the stream knows nothing of, or knowing of, absolutely refuses to recognize. I am proud of the stream. It may not be mathematical, but is poetical, which, with all deference to mathematicians, is much better. Mathematics are necessary; poetry is more necessary. God is both

mathematician and poet; but such combination exists only in him. Men must be mathematician or poet; and, as for me, I will join hands with the poet if he will let me.

Every water course refuses (absolutely and without reason, like a little man) to go on section lines. I have watched them through many years and have never found a stream which would of its own accord go as the crow flies. Water is a sad gad-about. It has no more notion of sticking to a road than a dog has when he goes driving with you. In short, the stream has a mind of its own, like a little woman; and there is the end of it. You can not argue with water. Like a woman, it goes by intuition; but its ways, like a woman's ways, are very sweet and self-justificatory.

Every stream is a poet. Poets are born so. How many streams I have followed toward or to their source! What wild rollics I have had, with the streams laughing at me with wild rollicking laughter,

like a man from Kansas, and slapping me on the shoulder like a man from Nevada! In the mountains (was it yesterday or this forenoon?) what boyish delight I have taken in going uphill in August with a water-brook, till, with spent strength, but with wild, hilarious spirits, I have laid me down on my stomach to drink waters just squeezed from the snow drift. Who would drink wine after such elixir? How could he? And the laughter of the water—God tuned its singing as he did the singing of the winds; and there is no complaint of flattening or sharpening, no defective tones, only music, music, music!

I have followed streams on mountains and on prairie and through thickets of Minnesota and through Wisconsin pines, and through the dreary foot-hills, and through lonely sage-grown desert, and through the high meadows of Colorado, standing above the summits of Tennessee mountains, and in meadows in New England hills, where the streams



beguiled me back into the woodlands and through them to where beyond still other meadows lay, through grasses and out of sight under grasses till you could only tell the water was not lost or was not asleep by leaning ear on the grass, and hearing the chimes of it sweet as vesper bells in the days gone by; and in the Berkshire Hills of Massachusetts and the Derbyshire district in England, and where in an island a runnel hurried to the sea as it were to keep tryst with her he loved, and many a rivulet near the seashore where the waters lingered, as if now that the great sea was so near it feared to take the last step of the journey and have not any home on land forever, and the salt tides of sea ran up and took the rivulet on its breast and bore it back far up where the marsh grasses floated upstream with the tides,—I have seen water courses everywhere, but not one have I seen not sinuous as a swallow's flight.

Streams flow to the point of least resistance (really, I feel proud of that sentence. It has a weighty sound. I feel scientific. If I am not

on guard I will speak of "environment" next—lest I do, let me hasten on, tightening my belt for speed); and in consequence their goings are a series of sweet lawlessnesses. A bright stream in Syria was named Meander, and from its multitudinous wanderings we keep the word "meander" to mean a journey in winding ways. The reason why every stream is beautiful is because every stream is bent on meandering.

Lovers can not keep to a sidewalk. They give scant attention to direction. A stream is the same. I think it has no compass and does not know it can steer by the pole star. I rejoice in its ignorance. I am right glad it has no theodolite and chain, but has a sweet unreasonableness and pouting self-will and strict inattention to rules and advices—the stream "doeth whatsoever it will." Who but God taught the waters this



THROUGH LONG GRASSES

quaint unreasonableness? Every step the stream takes is a deviation. Being in no hurry it may be as leisurely as a summer afternoon. Streams are in no sweaty haste, but with blunt Walt Whitman, may loaf and invite their soul; and so it happens that they will spend a half day in your field when they might get beyond it in a jiffy. I love their loitering. The streams go nosing around, digging under banks, stopping to demolish a sandbar, then waiting to build a sandbar, putting a curve on everything as a rainbow does, building little peninsulas where a wild flower may root, laving the roots a sycamore has inadvertently thrust too near the stream, dawdling around in pools, chasing its own bubbles as a kitten runs after its own tail (poor silly), making froth at the edge of some root which has with temerity walked out across the stream, pouring down its little world of waters from a play-ledge of rocks, and so has dug a little hollow where the waters stay when the stream runs dry, running around and building an island so they may study

geography without going to school, making a bold maneuver, like a skillful general, and swinging back so far as to construct a huge peninsula, and within a three-feet of flowing back into itself, when in strange willfulness turning off in a new direction to go clean to the back of the hill, where the rocks jut out, laughs at them for being naked, and chasing sunlight along its way and then drowsing within the shadows (for the heat is too intense to enjoy long at a time), thus loitering, then running off in great speed as if to do an errand forgotten, then off into another direction out into the open where grass is growing and willows dream; then down where the banks are high and steep, and where no sunlight is, and then dodges like children when they play blindman's buff: and the upshot of all this is—the stream has written a poem of journeys.

Never walk across lots when a stream is in your neighborhood (unless you are going on an errand for your wife. Then stay not on the ordering of your going), but follow the stream as the sycamores do. You shall find enchantment such as Merlin the mage knew not; and you will be led afield where the voices will make you glad and where every new step will be new delight, as with Merlin following "The Glean."



FOUR SEASONS—ONE YEAR





SPRING

FOUR SEASONS=ONE YEAR



THAT the good God of the Out-of-Doors could have made five seasons or six is quite among his possibles, though not of ours; yet am I, for one, content that he made us four. That is enough. Four is his sacred number; and sacred the quaternion of the seasons surely is. Think through the four seasons as if your thought were an arrow-flight speeding from spring through summer, autumn, winter into spring again, and feel how adequate the journey was. Spring was birthday, summer love-making, fall the glow and glory of the day of life, winter the battle mood and madness. Beginning, wooing, enjoying, fighting with a world of foes, what besides is there in life?

Four seasons are enough. They engulf the year in their glorious ocean as reefs are swallowed in the high tides that caress and kiss and make tiger springs of furious passion. Four seasons—I will thank God for that mercy also. They are none too many, not two nor one, but just enough; like the number of children at anybody's house, never one too many.

I want no climate where the seasons are reduced to two or one. A year-long winter does not suit my thought nor me, nor does a year-long summer. One season to fill the year is too sedate. I like not its narcotic; for it makes the faculties drowse like lotus-eating, whereas Nature, if we are to make much of it, must be watched with undiminished interest and appetite. A drowsy man might as well be asleep for all the good he gets from company or landscape. Did you ever try to carry your part of a conversation when you were nodding and napped



between your own fragments of dialogue? It is a grief to me to think of my lapses of this sort, when, though in goodly company, a too long journey in the wind had blown awakement from my eyes and spirits and I drowsed like an August afternoon. O, it was grievous! And to wake with an intellectual summersault and join blithely in the conversation, as if my silence had arisen from cogitation well-nigh lost in the morass of that fen—too profound thought! As I think of my stealth of reapproach to convivial conversation and of my vivid remorse over the outraged rites of hospitality, I blush while setting these sad confessions down, but rejoice that these sleepy moods of mine were abnormal, fitful, isolated. I am usually awake, my blinds up and my doors open. The plover will not call and I not hear, nor the veery cry nor the crickets chirr, nor the dirty-faced, ragged lad sit astride an impossible landscape of toppling habitation and I not see his ragged glee and rejoice. No, I am not customarily asleep; I am usually awake and have been known to be wide awake. I will make my prayer to be preserved from the drowsy spirit; and that my prayer may be the surer of answer, I would wish to live in a four-seasoned year. Give me the seasons' cycle to keep my life awake. "When will the birds come?" that is springtime's question. "When will the birds cease their singing?" that is summer's query. "When will the birds tire of us and be gone?" that is autumn's sad question. "When will the dull clouds shake their mantles and fleck the world with snow?" that is winter's surly interrogative. Thought has little room for sleep if the four seasons be kept pace with, seeing they are so swift of foot, and outrun the speed of mourning doves in autumn flights. Though he said little enough about his subject, goodness knows, Thomson wrote about the four seasons. But in the mere writing about them was a virtue, specially in days when men cared so little for any season as Thomson's contemporaries did. We must never forget that he "took his pen in hand" to celebrate



the journeys of the year. Some people are virulently insistent on telling which season they like best. Such people vex me. I hope I may be forgiven for my seeming ill-nature, but honestly, what is the need of choosing? They are all ours. "All are yours." The round of the seasons, glad, sunlit, sweaty, shivering, all are mine. I own the summer's sultry noon and winter's surly storm winds, so why choose? Who owns mountain and valley need not vex himself to select between landscapes where he owns the whole. These "choosy" folks are like those



who persist in asking which fair woman in Shakespeare is loveliest. They miss the mark. Each one of Shakespeare's women is loveliest in what she is and for what she is. We do not always need to select. Take what comes. What call for anybody to choose one star of the firmament? I love them every one. Not one can be spared from the wide pasture-lands of heaven. Let each star trim his lamp and burn on, and may no single light blow out, that is all we ask. We must not select, but embrace (I am speaking not of women, but of stars). Or why should we be driven to the wall by "Which is your favorite flower?" I will not answer that question, although I know, because the asking is an impertinence. Woods and meadows, both are mine, and all the flowers that haunt springtime woodlands and ravines or flaunt their gold

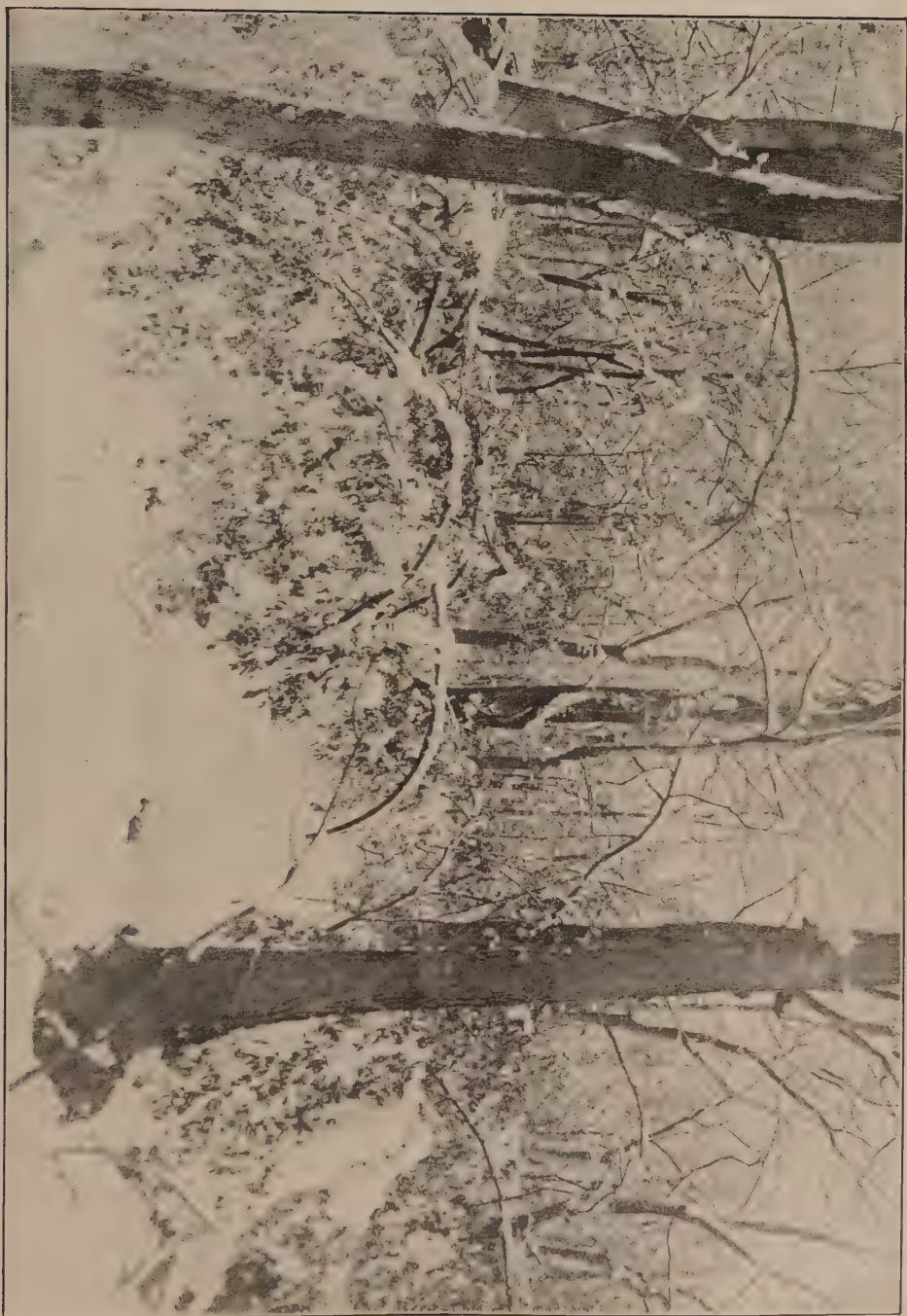
on autumn hills, if there is one I do not love, I wonder which it is. Homely flowers, half weed and more, and scant in color, or lacking in form, impress me as homely women—I am sorry for them; but their attempt at beauty pleases me. And the flowers, there are Maud Mullers, barefoot and tanned, but they are dear to me. I like their rustic simplicity. I will not choose so much as I will gather and enjoy all the flowers which tangle in Nature's garden through the bewildering year.



I am so with the seasons. No one shall decoy me into expressing preference now. What I may do later is immaterial. To-morrow I may, but it is not to-morrow now. This is to-day. To-day is to-morrow in bud, and buds bloom if the frosts do not scar their immature loveliness. But this I hold to as to the dirty, chubby hands of my little children; by and by I shall hold their hands as youths, and still further on, if God shall loan me so many days, I shall hold their hands as man and woman. Which shall I love the more? the baby hands or the lad's hands or the scarred hands of manhood? I will not answer: whether I could is inconsequent. I will hold their hands all **these**



AUTUMN



WINTER

days, and in that land where daylight lasts a long, glad while I shall hold them still. I need not choose and will not. The hands are mine; say that, my heart, and hold thy peace.

So the four seasons, I would sing a madrigal for each. Let Theocritus or some good woodsman, who loves to brush the dew from the stooping grasses of the early morning, let him sing a roundel for each season as it comes; and mind you, singer, spare no pains, sing sweetly and shame the mockingbird when he sings his "dropping song," what time he woos and tosses wildly like a jet of salt sea spray to the rapture of his own music.

"Sing me the song again!

The wild, sweet notes that thrill my heart with bliss:

Quick throbbing now with passionate disdain,

Now falling soft as evening breeze's kiss.

Sing me the song again!

Repeat the wondrous tune!

The full broad glory of the perfect moon,

The pearly glimmer of the clustering leaves,

The ghostly shadows of the night's high noon,

My listening soul perceives.

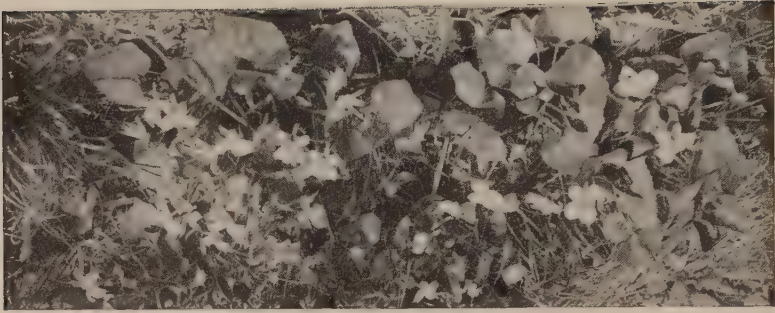
Repeat the wondrous tune!

—KATE HILLIARD.



ON WINTER PANES





ON WINTER PANES

*In winter days on window panes
Fair summers dream their gladness o'er,
And grow dim, shadowy, restful lanes
Of elm-tree and of sycamore.*

*I watch the glass, and watching see
Dear summers flushed with radiant June
And hear the song bird wild with glee,
And insects drone their drowsy tune.*

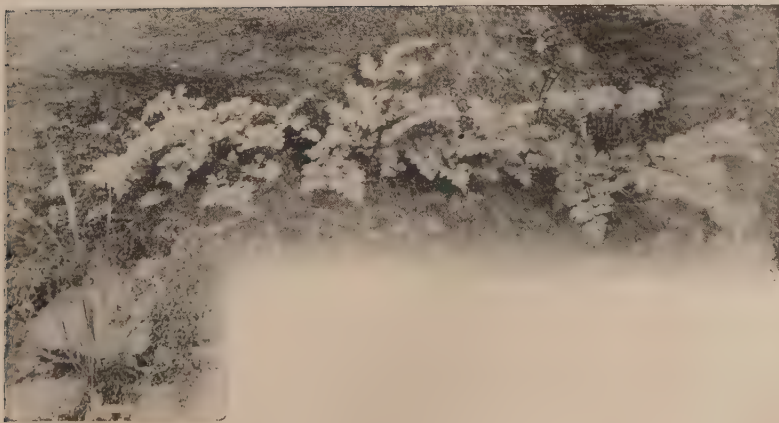
*I see far mountains wrapped in blue
And clouds that drift along the sky,
And valleys where with variant hue
The wild flowers bloom and blooming die.*



*I see the shaggy mountains throw
On high their plumes of oak and pine,
And roses in hid gardens grow
Their garlands ruddy as old wine.*

*On winter panes! There summer springs
Like Lark into deep skies of blue,
And lifts itself on singing wings
From meadow nest begemmed with dew.*

*Without, the winter blast sings loud
And trumpets like an angry bard;
Within, spring with its wind and cloud
Drifts incense sweet as precious nard.*



WALKING TO MY FARM





THE ROAD TO MY FARM

WALKING TO MY FARM



THE date is October four and the place Kansas, when I, a city man (O the pity of it!) land at a siding on a hilltop to take a day apart from the city calendar and rest my heart in the country quiet, away from the huckster, with his strident vociferations; away from the ragman, with his highly-developed theories of economics and his equally highly-developed lungs; away from the jangle of street cars and the ceaseless grind of wagon-wheels in their industrious pursuits; away from the blue-coated policeman, with his vigilant "Move on, there!" enforced with his uplifted billy; away from the train-caller, with his nasal "Nall aboard for—thū Santa—Fe—for Topeka, Santa Fe, San Francisco and the Philippines train on—the third track: Nall aboard;" and then, in a lower and confidential voice adds, "The Santa Fe is now ready." Away from this jargon without the courtesy of a good-bye; for I slipped off as if trying to avoid an officer; and here I am on the siding, with the day before me and no wagon grinding along the pavement, nor any street car clanging at me with its virago bell; here, with autumn's quietness about me and the day before me, My heart, *carpe diem*. Enjoy, *enjoy this day*.

And I will. I shall walk to my farm. Those who always ride miss a good share of delight if their way leads through the country. Flowers and leaves and pastorals must be seen close at hand. Nature says

"Come nearer." Bike riders do not see the country, nor do buggy and horseback riders. Be leisurely and walk. Dally, loiter, poke along, putter, or, if you like not these words get a word you do like, only let the word express delayed and loving motion, the sort of leisureliness a brook knows, running when it feels like running, drowsing when it has a drowsy mood, in silvern basins where sun and shadows meet, shadows to woo to slumber, sun to stoop and kiss the waters awake. So the brook loiters. Do you, friend, when and if you would see an autumn landscape do the like. Choose your word to fit that motion and fit your goings to the word.

The autumn wind slows to a saunter coming up the long ravine. Purple asters (and I have seldom if ever seen them so royal as this fall) cluster in flocks of loveliness. Black-eyed Susans had in coyness shaded their faces till they looked like buttercups long delayed in blooming, months past due, but keeping faith at last. Now and then morning-glories, with beauty of leaf and tendril and bell-shaped flower, stray and bloom, many of them being so deep a pink as to approach the glow of flame. Iron weed stands on its dignity (as usual) unbending, as people I have known, with its surly purple. Sumacs were dying, but this autumn have the fresh green of spring, so that here is a vivid green good for eyes to look upon. Wild grapes hang in purple bunches, sometimes in the shadow of their own leaves, rare as arabesques, but the grape leaves are turning brown as tired of this long daylight of summer and will soon be quit of it. For days past now they

*"Have been half in love with easeful Death,
Call'd him soft names in many a mused rhyme."*

Oaks have, some of them, the dull browns of winter save those glossy greens that so well become them, fairly flashing in the sun when the wind tosses them into momentary perturbation like play shields used in fairy tournaments. A distance in the background against a hill, sumacs stand in clumps, crimson as flushed sunsets. I am a good lover of the sumac. In the summer its leaves are so glossy and its fronds so beautiful, and in late summer its bunches of crimson berries are held on



high with such loyal pride as if they were a lady's favor to be worn on a knight's helmet, and those berries covered

thicker with frost than barn roof in October, and when the berries ripen to hang for the winter with their dull, coal-glow red and these frosts still unmelted by this glowing heat, I watch the wonder and the beauty of it with joy unconcealed. What is the sumac that God should lavish so much glory on it? And at the last, before the fronds fall, sumacs build their bonfires on the hills and keep them burning through many nights and days, for with them as with good lives "at eventide it shall be light;" for sumacs, which, as you watch them at sunset on a night, will the next morning be naked as dull death, only beneath them is a bed of living coals which shall soon be ashes. How the sumacs burn on this hillside! In a pasture beside my path as I saunter down the ravine a herd of calves lie under the shadow of a courteous elm (and has any tree more courtesy of shade than the elm?) ruminating in their care-free leisureliness which no creatures save the kine know. A crow (quite alone) goes soaring aloft (crows seldom soar—they fly, nor often fly high; this crow is soaring, and far up) and I accost him (country style, without introduction) with a hoarse "Ha, kha, caw," to which he pays scant heed, though I think he deflects his course just a trifle to see what manner of crow this free-mannered bird may be, and a little later calls in his catarrhal voice (he should consult a specialist) "Ha, ha, ha, kha!" and I am well repaid for my pertness. Here are no

"Fast-fading violets covered up in leaves."

Would there were. But violets are one with the spring that brought them.

I am come to where a clump of trees—willow, hickory, walnut, elm, oak—with their fast-falling leaves carpet the grass, and hazels with gold purses full of nuts lean tantalizingly near, and a runnel builds a toy bank for a divan. Here I take mine ease at mine inn and break bread with myself and watch the cattle going with their ample leisure down to the spring to drink, and eying me with a quizzical "You are lost, and who will find you?" and going on with never an offer of bovine help. Meantime I sit and listen to leaf fall and catch the autumn-leaf perfumes and hear the moan of the winds passing through the tree tops or curling the brown leaves in miniature fury, and while the wind makes its music I read Keats's "Ode to the Nightingale." Maurice Thompson was right in saying this ode should be read out of doors, and I shall add, as my contribution to his advice, it should be read Out-of-Doors and in autumn. To-day is the day. The poem has the odors of leaf

fall. 'T is as lonely as an autumn night, when you hear only the falling of the leaves to disturb the hush of darkness. Keats was stableboy, but deserted the stable for the blue sky and the Out-of-Doors, which was where he belonged, for all who are familiar with our poets must know that Keats is one of our chief pastoral poets. He loves and sees nature, and, without stammering, tells what he saw. Theories of beauty may limp, but beauty's self is as sure of foot as daylight, and as fleet of foot as morning. Those who frequent Out-of-Doors may have beauty for ashes—an exchange worth making. And Keats had made this exchange. He had often been

*"In some melodious plot
Of beechen green, and shadows numberless,"*

and had in "sun-burnt mirth" longed

*"For a beaker full of the warm South,
With beaded bubbles winking at the brim,
And purple-stained mouth,"*

and heard the nightingale a-singing

*"Perhaps the self-same song that found a path
Through the sad heart of Ruth, when sick for home,
She stood in tears amid the alien corn and wept.
Thy plaintive anthem fades
Past the near meadows, over the still stream,
Up the hill-side; and now 't is buried deep
In the next valley glades."*

So Keats sings, and so, under the trees, with heart set to leaf-fall, I read.

And here, while the light sifts down drowsily through the gorgeous leaves, as if loath to leave their glad glow, and leaves fall in leisurely fashion, as doing it for their own delight, while birds come, and with head leaning pertly on one side, twitter "Who are you and what *are* you doing here?"

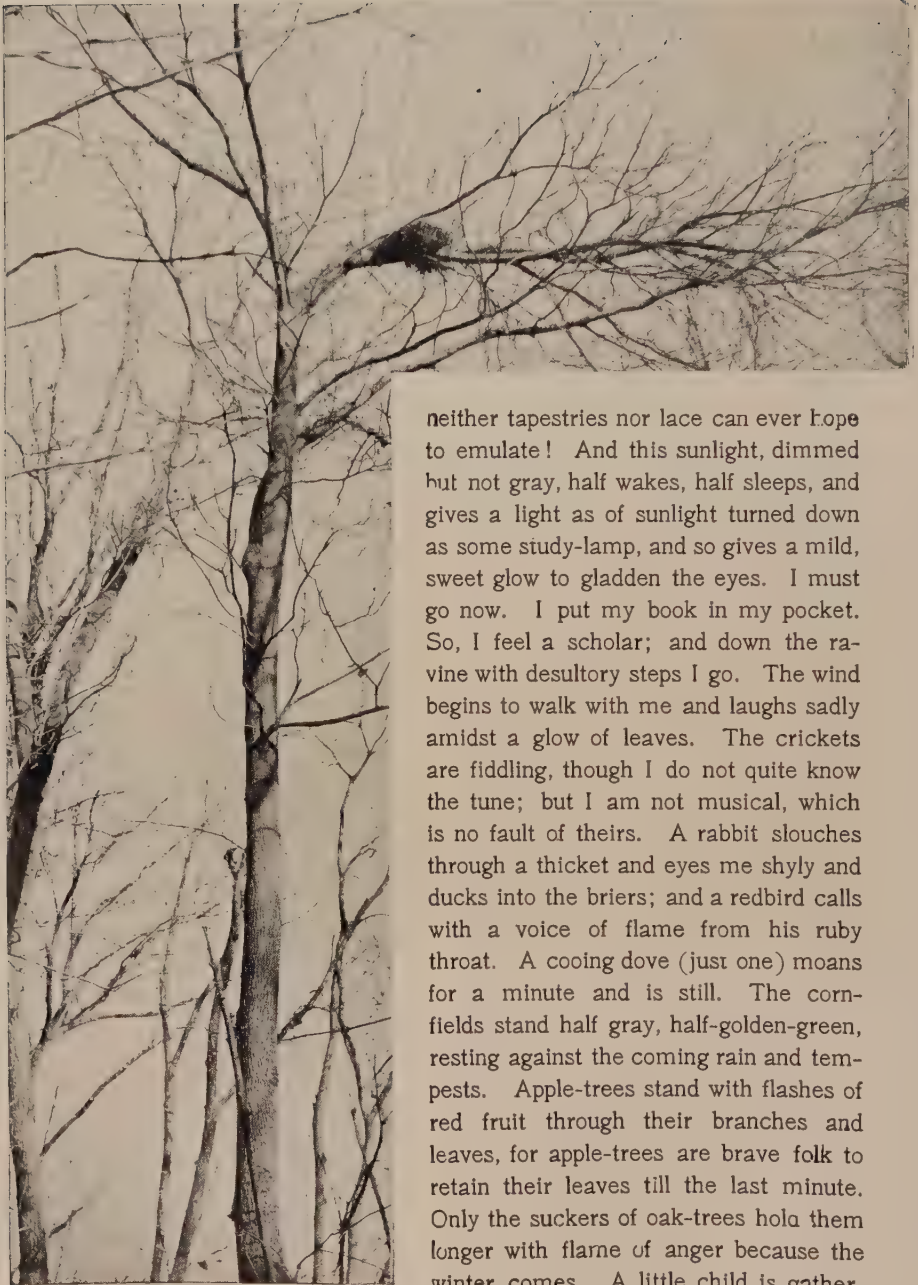
The leaves rustle. The wind takes occasional gusts and then sits down for rest, as I do. The clouds are bonnie, bonnie. When did I learn to

love the clouds, and did I teach myself or did John Ruskin teach me? No matter. I think it was born with me, like loving my mother, or being hungry for sight and hearing of the sea. But anyway I love the clouds and to-day they would make a dullard love them. They are so high, gauzy, tenuous. Those high cirrus clouds nobody ever painted so well as Turner, because nobody ever saw them so well. Seeing comes before painting. There is a chronology in production. These clouds this day are diaphanous, remote, leisurely, out a-strolling like myself. I wonder if they have a farm they are walking to? No one need giggle



SHADOWS

as if I were not walking to my farm. Because I am sitting around and reading Keats and watching clouds and herds of cattle and leaves is no sign I am not walking to my farm. To rest is to get ready for walking. This business is all of a piece. I am on my way to my farm. But where the clouds are going, with their slow step, I do not now say, not knowing, only they are taking their time. But nobody could paint them. Each one in all the fleecy multitudes has a new, fleeting loveliness. God loans them one divine form, and that only for a moment, and then changes it to another. How rich God is in patterns, which



neither tapestries nor lace can ever hope to emulate! And this sunlight, dimmed but not gray, half wakes, half sleeps, and gives a light as of sunlight turned down as some study-lamp, and so gives a mild, sweet glow to gladden the eyes. I must go now. I put my book in my pocket. So, I feel a scholar; and down the ravine with desultory steps I go. The wind begins to walk with me and laughs sadly amidst a glow of leaves. The crickets are fiddling, though I do not quite know the tune; but I am not musical, which is no fault of theirs. A rabbit slouches through a thicket and eyes me shyly and ducks into the briers; and a redbird calls with a voice of flame from his ruby throat. A cooing dove (just one) moans for a minute and is still. The corn-fields stand half gray, half-golden-green, resting against the coming rain and tempests. Apple-trees stand with flashes of red fruit through their branches and leaves, for apple-trees are brave folk to retain their leaves till the last minute. Only the suckers of oak-trees hold them longer with flame of anger because the winter comes. A little child is gather-

ing walnuts under my trees with his hands dyed with walnut juice, as mine were when I was a boy; and a bluejay is stealing my acorns and hiding them (he is a merry thief who steals for the love of stealing, for he forgets where he has hid his plunder); and blackbirds are making tumult in the tree-tops, talking all at once, and though I do not profess familiarity with their dialect I catch enough to know they are planning to leave my woods, for which I am sorry enough. Now they take long gyrations and swift, framing a black cloud like gathering tempest, and then settle down with a choppy kind of laughter. To-night they will go



to sleep in the tree-tops, but in the morning they will be gone; for in the night, down some long stream's windings, they will have haled to a sunlit land where, instead of fallen leaves, flowers perfume the air. Than these night migrations of the birds nature has no stranger doing and no sadder.

And I trudge along the highway like a tramp; but the moment I set foot on my farm I strut like a turkey *en route* to thanksgiving. I am here. I walked here. I knew I was walking when I was sitting in the leaf-fall and dreaming awhile. I am here. Let turnips and corn-shocks, planted trees and those God planted, bushes frownsy as an unkempt head,

and trees dyed with blood, all know that the proprietor of this manor is come.

I climb the hill. I see the cattle browsing on the meadow. I hear the musings of winds in the trees, and look at Quaylecroft, and flush with pride, and stand at the gash in the woods at the hilltop and see the blue, far, partly surly dimness of distance that clothes valley and hill and corn-field and wandering of stream in beauty of dimness; and see how the hills are great bonfires, and seared grasses and burning sumacs make one hillside a regal purple. And I go down the hill and walk along my wood road (you ought to see it) paved with leaves multicolored and odorous, where shade and sunlight meet like old cronies; there I sit and dream, sometimes of yesterday, sometimes of to-morrow, sometimes of that far, glad to-morrow where burdens never tire us nor any tears wear ruts on the face nor dim the eyes from seeing, but where beloved meet the BELOVED, and holy laughter fills the heart forever.

*"Lightly he blows, and at his breath they fall,
The perishing kindreds of the leaves: they drift,
Spent flames of scarlet, gold aerial,
Across the hollow year, noiseless and swift.
Lightly he blows, and countless as the falling
Of snow by night upon a solemn sea,
The ages circle down beyond recalling,
To strew the hollows of eternity.
He sees them drifting through the spaces dim,
And leaves and ages are as one to him."*

—CHARLES G. D. ROBERTS.



MY FARM





THE TENANT PLOWS THE FIELD AND THE CROWS FOLLOW IN THE FURROW

MY FARM



I OWN a farm. This is stated in a spirit of pardonable vanity. I am of those who are "purse proud," having a farm which some friends of mine affect to make light of as if the possession of a demesne of eighty acres was a matter of small consequence. However, none of these things move me. I am impervious to such intimations, knowing as I do, though I regret to say it, that they all spring from envy.

One friend—though I have cut his acquaintance since the remark—being asked where my farm lay, replied with a Machiavelian look, "It does not lie, it stands on end," referring to the fact, in which I take great and legitimate pride, that this estate of mine *lies* on a very steep hill. I think it strange that envy can so seize one who is otherwise pleasant and companionable and virtuous.

After careful and disinterested observation, I am prone to believe that owning a farm tends to catholicity and magnanimity. In any case, since having the estate alluded to, I am totally disinterested. Mansions tempt me not. No roomy ranch with herds and harvests stings me to covetousness. I too am a landholder. Some of Mother Earth is mine. I own a tree, and a ravine, and a spring of running water, and a red clover pasture, and a whip-poor-will, and much moonlight, and a small bit of sky, and now and then a cloud. What hinders me being a landed proprietor? Do I not pay taxes and own tax receipts, and work road tax? Do not neighboring landed gentry complain of the ill-repair of

my fences so that their cattle come into my field and eat of my corn, which they lay as a grievance against me, instead of complaining at their cattle as culprits? Are not these things credentials of proprietorship of such magnitude as that no holders of a principality can do better save in the quantity of taxes and complaints?

I consider landholding gives a man an independence of spirit not obtainable in any other way. He has a spot whereon to live, and—if need be—whereon to die and wherein to be buried. Wherever he is, though he own not the land on which he walks, he yet retains the feeling that there is a bit of earth whereon he walks with the step of a lord, not to say a conqueror. A landholder loses that apologetic air so detrimental to manhood. His proprietary instinct precipitates (to speak in chemical phrase in deference to the soil of my farm) in his attitude and conduct. He can not be browbeaten by the vulgar or the elite. Truly some have larger holdings than mine; but the depth of their land is not greater than mine, nor the height of their sky. They may grow a little more crop; but if they grow a little more, I grow a little less, so that I too have my idiosyncrasy of genius.

As appears, I am not a Henry Georgeite. He vexes my soul. I am for ownership of soil, and albeit the owning is rather expensive, I do not retract a sentiment, nor regret a penny planted in my soil (though it has never had the courtesy to so much as sprout). No, with all deference to the ghost of Henry George, I must say that so far from land ownership being against nature, it is strictly in harmony with nature, especially with my nature. I am of opinion that land, like a child, likes to belong to somebody.

I am a son of the soil. Emerson says (and his words are golden), that contact with the earth is medicinal; and I doubt not he is right. Confident I am that contact with my earth is medicinal. The moment I set foot on my farm I seem to have stepped under my meridian. But Christian humility is so developed in me that I walk not haughtily nor yet obsequiously, though I confess to a certain erectness of shoulders not native to me, for I am a large trifle stooped (much learning is presumed to be the cause); but Emerson did not say all the truth. Contact with the earth is medicinal, but we do not need medicine much of the time. I will advance on my friend Emerson's dictum, affirming that contact with the earth is dietary. We must all eat, not as a matter of luxury, but necessity. Now, contact with the ground is one way a man "can live without dining." (Apology to Owen Meredith's ghost).

I have long since been persuaded that I breathe through my feet (not to the exclusion of my lungs, to be sure), and I am now, since becoming a landholder, prone to believe that eyes, hands, and feet, are sorts of receptive and assimilative organs, and that on the earth one can eat without the usual routine. I feel a satisfied hunger when I get on my farm (not denying that a lunch helps to the entire satisfaction of hunger). A look about me as corn shocks stand yellow as rusty brass in the slant light of autumn, or on the growing corn, standing tall and straight as regulars on duty, with the utter grace of the blades as they swing indolently as doing it out of courtesy and not of necessity; or when I see tangles of weeds down along the runnels or hedge corners (for I confess to a frank delight in weeds, even if they grow in a spirit of impertinence in my field; for tangles of weeds are never inartistic. They are like women, always of beautiful pose)—and when I see weeds on my farm and know that they are mine, I feel as if I had been at Thanksgiving dinner (at another man's house). Contact with earth, friend Emerson, is not only medicinal, but dietary. Set that down for certain. When on my farm a spirit of courtesy controls me. I feel a rising hospitality. I wish to invite the farmless to come in and sit under my shade, and walk in my sunshine; for I have both. People may have their chance when on my premises. I feel a resident spirit of pity for learned men, and lawyers, and merchants, and all such as have no farm. I find myself looking at them with commiserative eyes, though themselves look at my farm and me with ill-concealed pity, while I hold on tight to my overalls—one suspender being "busted;"—these landless men, I repeat, look at me with a smile ill concealed; and I am not so blind as not to see that they have their jest at my expense the minute they pass me by, turning to look back at me as if I were a joke. To be patient with such superficiality and frivolity is hard, but I am. If they pity me, I pity them; and I have the farm. And this farm of mine is much more than people suppose. They think I was buncoed when I bought the place; but I was not. They think so because the descent of the farm is swift and the ascent slow. These are facts; but it does not follow that I was beaten in my bargain—far from it. This is my shrewdness. There is more land on a farm with steep hills on it than on a level plot. One would think people would know that, but people are not profound as I have discovered since becoming a landholder; they see neither deep nor far. Now, as I have intimated in plain statement, my farm taxes at eighty acres, but after

climbing up the thing and sliding down the thing a good many times, I am firmly convinced that I own in the neighborhood of one hundred and sixty acres; and this increase in my estate is wholly attributable to the steep incline. To own a hill seems to me the acme of desire. Aspiration blooms out on hills, and besides so situated, I need not migrate with the birds to get the seasons, or summer or winter residence. All I need do is to toil up the hill, or slide down it. At one extremity, viz., the hill, I call the habitation there erected Quaylecliff, and the residence erected at the base of the hill I call Quaylecroft. Now, could a man owning a level farm, every foot of which is tillable, have so economical, and yet so delightful arrangement, or coin such names for his vernacular? Evidently he could not. The flat farm owner may have larger crops and may in consequence get some rent, and moreover, his land may stay where it was put with more tenacity; but these are inconsequential matters when compared with the legitimate aristocracy of possessing such names as "cliff" and "croft." Now these localities are on my farm and have been for several years. They go with the place. I own one hundred and sixty acres (or close to that), of spring, summer, autumn, winter. I do not wish to boast. Vanity is not natural to me. I have not been accused of a predisposition to braggadocio, but do confess that when I consider how sections of the four seasons are mine to rent, loan, or sell, I am with difficulty restrained from a little Falstaffian swagger, not to say lying. Sometime, I fear, when off guard, I shall be guilty of both; but the provocation will, to my thought, justify.

This farm has had a fine diversity of tenants since I have been paying taxes on it. Variety is the spice (allspice, also pepper), of farming. I detest the humdrum of changelessness, and have suffered nothing from *ennui* from this cause since becoming proud possessor of this estate. My first tenant was an Ethiopian. He was a good man, and religious, and his wife raised turkeys, and he had a family great for multitude, but his wife had—in some calamity prior to coming to my farm—lost one of her bodily supports, and so chased her family over my farm on one leg. Now this condition irritated my sense of female grace. Woman is a biped. This woman was a uniped. Such a condition was contrary to nature; and a farmer must not go in the face of nature any more than in the face of Providence. I say no more. The next renter was, in the vernacular, a Dutchman. He was a brave horse trader, and set posts for my vineyard, and possessed much suavity



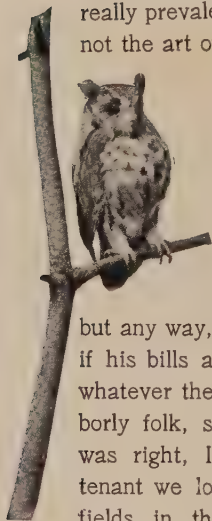
CORN SHOCKS FITCH THEIR TENTS LIKE AN ARMY

of manner (though not much suavity of farming) ; but when he met me he had a habit of saying in a loud voice fitted for calling cattle, "Hello, Doc., how ish de old vooman?" This considerate attention coming to Mrs. Mugwump's ears, the man moved from the farm before his lease expired. The next gentleman to do me the courtesy to reside on my farm gratis, was an American. He was a devotee of business, but not of my business. He took the medal, however, for raising sunflowers. When he was on horseback (and he rode a tall and angular nag), he could ride through his sunflower grove and not be detected. He was as practically concealed as if he had been riding through the forests of the Amazon. Now I was gratified to see the excessive fertility of my soil ; but the neighbors smiled at the harvest, and I think one's neighbors are to be considered (no man liveth to himself). This tenant went away leaving the spring in the old spot, for which I was duly grateful. The barb wire fence he wrapped up in reels. I hope he used it for settees. The next tenant was an Irishman and was a choice spirit, kindly, but not facetious ; courageous, but not a man of levity ; a Sir Walter Raleigh in the use of the pipe, and as honest as Aristides. He encourages the apples to grow, but discourages the cockle burs, and the reverse had been the uniform custom of his predecessors—my tenants (I speak with pride in my pencil), and the change was to me pleasant because it had the virtue of absolute novelty. My only fault with this tenant is that he is so overworked keeping my farm in order (this according to him) that he has no time to go to church. This intensity of application, while it speaks well for his industry, does not commend itself to me as first rate piety ; however under his vigilant administration, the sunflowers are not a good crop, but the corn can be seen even by the casual observer, and in the winter, corn shocks pitch their tents on the place like some army in winter quarters. While lauding with all intensity the industry of this tenant and studying the corn he raised with admiration, since I have not seen its like before, I still confess missing the sunflowers that grew with such enthusiasm and made such fine shade, and even in the winter under their kind auspices, the rabbits ate my apple-trees with delightful avidity and friendliness which always challenged my admiration. I always like to have my neighbors feel at home with me. The rabbits used (and used-up) my apple-trees ; but the apple-trees are generally understood to have nourished the rabbits, and apple-trees and myself are in this world to do other people good.

Strange things happen on my farm. Any night of clear skies the

Pleiades take a stroll over my farm looking at it intently; but what they see justifies a long journey. The sun walks on the south line of my farm in winter, and straight across my farm in summer. A public highway goes along the east and just the same on the west of said real estate, and on the north I run a domestic highway, which is, I may say, however, "eloquent with beauty." Nothing keeps away from this farm. This, I think, creditable to the place—for instance, the road on the west crowds rather rudely on my ground, ostensibly because the hill is so steep, the road must make the ascent by angles; actually because I have such inviting shade that the road panting hot in long summer days urges its tired way under my spreading trees to rest like a school-boy tired with climbing.

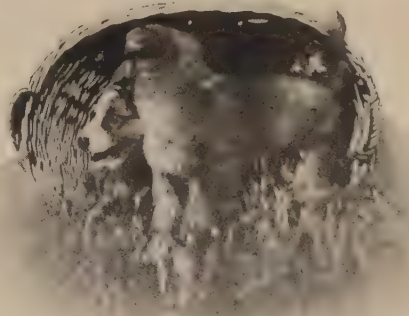
More things than I, love my farm, so that I conclude good taste is really prevalent. The sportsmen come to my wooded hill, though I like not the art of killing. But my neighbors do have the courtesy to come and send a cloud of powder smoke along my fields or in my woods, and a flock of quails whirrs by on startled wing, and—more 's the pity—sometimes one flutters out of his company and falls dying in the grass, or on the leaves. The rabbit frequents my cornfield, which I take as a compliment, though he is a costly visitor, because he persists in dining off the bark of my apple orchard, and I have a scuffle all winter long with him and his to teach them manners; but any way, all hospitality is costly, and the hospitable man must not sulk if his bills are heavy when his friends are many. Friends are cheap whatever they cost. I would not have my farm deserted of these neighborly folk, squirrel and jay and quail and rabbit and crow. Burns was right, I think. The mouse is worth his board. From such a tenant we lose a little and gain a great deal. What were a hundred fields in their loss of grain matched with Burns's poem on the "Mousie," which fairly aches with sympathy for the beasties of the field? I confess to a love for the hawk with his swift shadow and his bold flight rich in the ecstasy of motion; and when I hear the owl call piteously through the dark in the back lands, along the fringes of the hills in the dark woods, I like him too. He is not mannerly, nor cordial. He is not even commonly sociable. I have found him a sort of morose, sullen creature, but he has a touch of sadness in his voice, and doubtless may have his own family troubles, which may account for his behavior ("Judge not, lest ye be judged"). These folks are all my neighbors and



are welcome. They have rights as well as I; and after these years of farming wherein losses have much outranked my gains, so much so that long since I have ceased to keep accounts because I felt so sad and disappointed when I looked at my balance sheet. After these years, I say, I like these marauders. Were they absent, I might raise more (I can not say), but I would enjoy less. I am a hedonist when on my farm. I love to hear the quail's call on a summer afternoon when evening is not far away. His note is so clear, so liquid clear, and his cheer is like perennial joy, and when you can give him a playground and house and garden patch in your field for so little cost, and for such cheerful piping, I, for one, love him for a tenant. And the rabbits, with their strange timorousness, that seem to dwell in perpetual fear, yet have delight through all their troubles, I love them. To

see a rabbit sprawling like a pickaninny in the sun, is to see a life-size picture of contentment and grace; and in the summer, when the dogs seem to have their teeth pulled, the rabbit will calm his fear for a moment to look at your coming, and the rabbit child—no bigger than a country biscuit—is so cute as to make me always call him by some pet diminutive as I do my baby. And

when they hie them to the thicket where the briers are rabbit barricades, their scurry away is like dim laughter, and I like them for tenants too. They may stay without gruff talk from me. I am for the rights of the world. The crow—nothing would induce me to part from him. Frankly, I love him, though to the best of my belief, he does not return my affection. I love him and am glad I have woods where he nests in summer, and where he spends his nights in winter with his dusky wings close against his dusky sides and his sagacious eyes asleep. He may do harm, but I doubt it; he does more good than harm. He is friend to the farmer, but we farmers do not always know our friends; but, friend or foe, I like him. His dudish and impertinent walk, his disinclination to have anything to do with me, his stay with us all winter when other birds are mostly gone leaving us alone, his remarks which



some think dull, but I think droll, his fondness for his own kind and apparent ability to get along with his wife's folks, his choppy, short flights, like an inexperienced rower rowing hard over tumbling waters, his higher flights, sometimes graceful as the soaring hawk, and all but as swift, his sure home coming at the night, sometimes with wild speed and sometimes slowly as if in his long journey of the day he had grown wing-weary, his steadfast love for home; for wherever he may have been by daylight, home he comes by twilight; and if you have ever heard him calling across the evening sky glorious with sunset, and winging his way as if he might cross a continent, and then all of a sudden he gyrates like a cyclone funnel—for he has gotten home,—if you have seen this, your heart must have been touched as well as your eye gratified, for if everybody knew enough to come home at night wherever they may have been by day, the world would have more laughter, and sweeter mirth, and more heaven before heaven were journeyed to. No, I like the crow and his independence of me and my liking (for he ignores me as he struts along my field as if *he* paid taxes instead of myself). When I speak to him, he deigns no reply, but walks on with his proprietary air; he does not know me and apparently does not want to. Who has set his black mind against me, I can not tell, but certain it is he will not be friends with me (some people think he is wise in that, but my judgment is he makes a mistake). I do not like to be ignored, even by a crow; however, I like him so well he is welcome to his impertinent mien. He survives, no thanks to others. Nobody seems to love him; but he is indifferent. He does not sulk nor hide, he never runs to shelter like the rabbits, nor hides in the hedge rows like the quail, but affects the open, flies low over your head, talks to himself sometimes while he swaggers across the sky, lights among your corn shocks, grows priggish before your very eyes, snubs you, neither laughs nor giggles, but is always solemn as a hired mourner, propitiates nobody except himself. He is brave as a soldier and sometimes as truculent; but winter, spring, summer, autumn, here he is, sometimes by himself walking along like a preacher concocting his sermon, sometimes with a few intimate friends like a bevy of girls after a party, and like the girls all talking at once, sometimes, especially in autumn or winter, in great conventions noisy as stump orators and as indefinite in destination,—here he stays, and here he lives despite his foes; and to be brief, I like him, and I feel proud with what I hope is Scriptural pride, that so stately a gentleman condescends to help me farm. I like that part immensely.



CROWS

And the squirrel, I like him. I love his russet hilarity. I enjoy his impudence, for at sight of me he orders me off the place. I have the tax receipts. I have by the sweat of my face secured them; but no difference, he has the rights of squatter sovereignty, and bids me in an unseemly and bossy fashion to quit the premises and leave the woods to him. He is delicious in his effrontery as the nip of a winter wind. He scurries across my winter leaves, zigzags up the trees, pauses not to get breath, but to give me a piece of his mind, tosses himself from tree-top to treetop, crows over me because I can not do it, sits and giggles at me, "I dare you to do it;" eats a nut he has stolen from me in my presence, and eats it with the method of an epicure, tosses off squirrel jokes at me, which I being only a man and a trifle slow do not see the fun in until the next day, and throws them at me in a catarrhal voice (for a squirrel always has a cold which affects his bronchial tubes), and while taking another one of my walnuts from his pocket, he sails off without the courtesy of an "Excuse me, please;" notwithstanding I like him, and had I my way, no squirrel should ever be shot in my woods. I would pension him to stay.

But come, friend, and I will take you through my farm, or to speak with greater accuracy in deference to my neighbors and critics, I will take you up and down my farm, and you shall see for yourself what riches I am master of. Come to the hilltop. This hill, to use the phrase of our sweet friend, Alfred Tennyson, is "tiptilted like the petal of a flower," which is poetry for the prose of pug-nosed. This hill has considerable individuality, for which I praise it. There is no hill just like it hereabouts, nor for that matter thereabouts—wherever that is. I want you to notice this view, actually it beats all. I have traveled—well, I will not boast, I simply say I have traveled—let your imagination fill in the rest, lest I seem to be like those vain boasters who compare everything they see with what they profess to have seen. However, resuggesting, "I have traveled"—and this hill just beats all and this view is like the hill. This view is worth a gold mine. Have you traveled far and seen much? Then, friend, look and tell me in candor, have you seen more beauty than here? From this cliff you can see many unhindered miles, where beauty blooms profuse as lilacs in the spring.



If you look southward, and I want you to, note that delicious blue beyond the blue. See how it tilts against the sky like the dear sea! Really, friend, my farm is cheap whatever it cost me, to have the sea on its south horizon. Here I am, geographically stated, fifteen hundred miles from the ocean, and, in all honor, as I look over and over again, I feel looking at the sea as I have seen it from the inlands of the Isle of Mona, as I have seen it from the shores of Maine, back in the



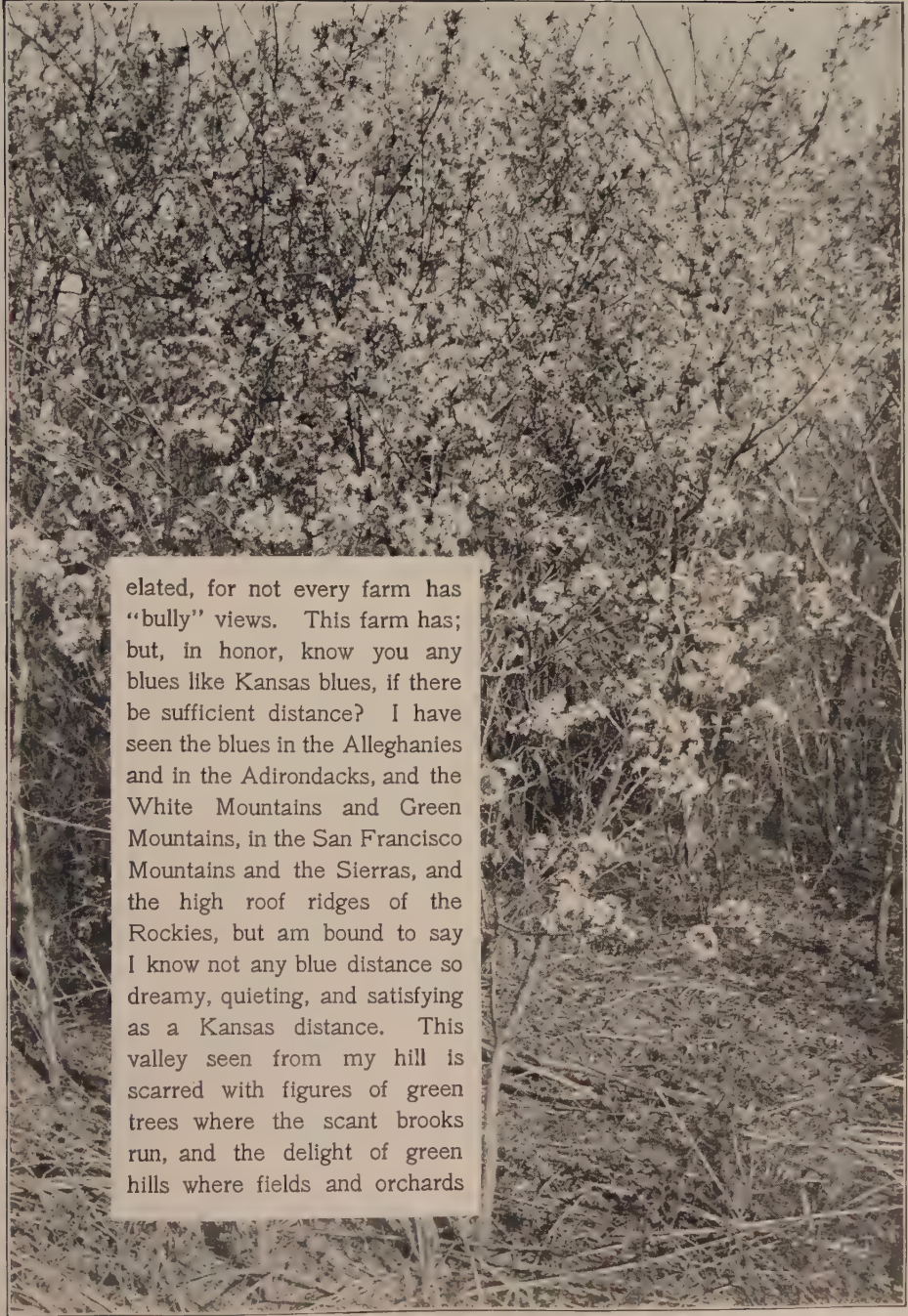
meadows with the pines for background, or in California, where scorched deserts smoked at my back in the furious sun; but this sea we are looking on now has all the ravishment of those, and did I not know (for I am a knowing man, notwithstanding many intimations to the contrary) that the sea was not there, I could take oath that there its waters lashed shoreward with multitudinous music and gentle laughter. Often from this hill have I refreshed my tired spirit by watching this bewilderment of sea, and have been fain to believe that a sea breeze went lingering by my cheek. Here I entertain dreams of the sea, and the murmur of soft music comes to me as when in long blessed nights, I have half slumbered and half wakened on a seabeach listening to the hoarse calls from the tremendous deep when it "moans round with many voices." This is my seashore, and these cliffs are my sea cliffs, and I could stand and watch this blue, unhindered ocean, all the glad day as in a happy dream. Here I may with Friend Whittier—pitch my tent upon the beach, and hear the night wind surging through the tree tops with unquenchable music, and think I hear the music of the sea. And then this sea is not a dream of the sea, but

a dreamless sea, and do you wonder I love my farm when it borders on what sweet Blackmore calls "the great unvintaged ocean?"

Now, friend, look northward, Once I tried to experiment on my Dutchman (mine then, but mine no longer; he has changed pasture, much to the benefit of my pasture) saying, "That is a beautiful view, is n't it?" To which, while he tamped the posts down and spat copious tobacco on my grass, he replied, "Bully." That was praise and I was



THE GOLDEN DAYS OF HARVEST



elated, for not every farm has
"bully" views. This farm has;
but, in honor, know you any
blues like Kansas blues, if there
be sufficient distance? I have
seen the blues in the Alleghanies
and in the Adirondacks, and the
White Mountains and Green
Mountains, in the San Francisco
Mountains and the Sierras, and
the high roof ridges of the
Rockies, but am bound to say
I know not any blue distance so
dreamy, quieting, and satisfying
as a Kansas distance. This
valley seen from my hill is
scarred with figures of green
trees where the scant brooks
run, and the delight of green
hills where fields and orchards

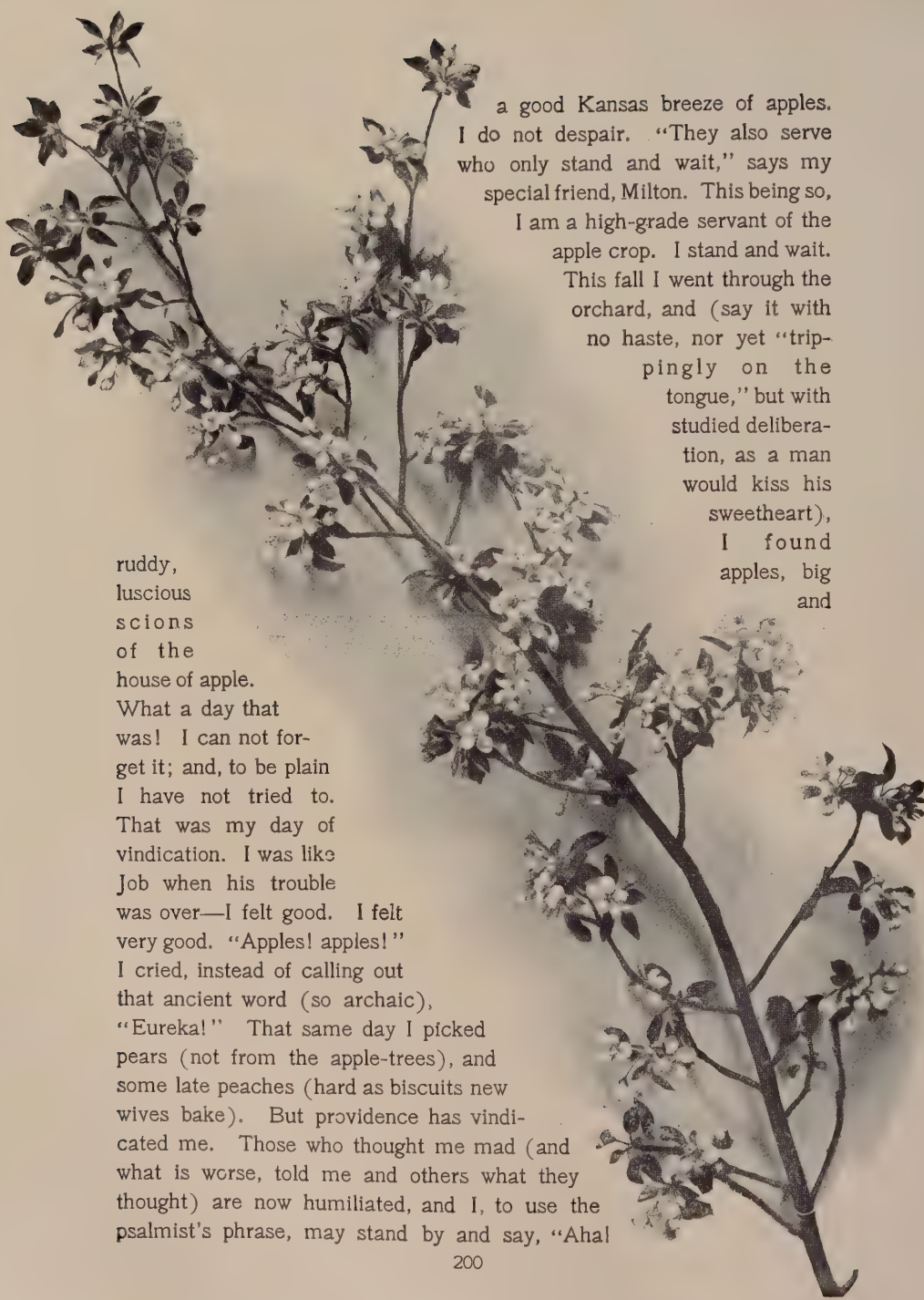
cuing in sheer fertility, and valleys where deep green of cornfields is islanded in seas of amethyst, and in June, harvests are billowy with gold whose stately waves toss and break on a green strand of the field edge with never a white crest of billow, nor a sound of waters breaking on the shore, and when the grain is harvested and stands in tents of gold as if an army of angels were camped there upon a holiday—ah! but the valley is sweet to look upon; and in such golden days of harvests, I have sometimes dreamed I was looking upon the city (where my hopes and my loves build a little house eternal in the heavens), whose streets are pure gold. And if angels would come flying homeward on a summer afternoon and look, they would think that they were nearer than they dreamed. And, besides, this view is a surprise, for the road that comes from the south leading straight up to it must take a sharp turn when it passes my hedge and jog into my land—when through the lattice of the trees and through the gateway in my woods—this fair vision breaks on you like the vision poets see. This crop never fails me (the other crops never succeed). Drouth, hot winds, too late spring, or too early spring, insects of divers names but all with ravenous instincts, poor plowing or no plowing, late sowing, or too early sowing, or no sowing whatsoever (I have had considerable of this kind of crops last mentioned), whatever the condition and whatever happens to the crops I put in, nothing tampers with this harvest of beauty and this blessed vintage. God always gives me this crop. O! it is good to own this farm!

Rest your eyes now, friend (pardon me, your name slips my memory), from that long vision and look behind you. This is my red clover-field. If I am proud of this bit of landscape gardening, do not blame me. This red clover pasture here on this hilltop has a dreamy sway as if a wind blew from very far off. But when that leaf of the clover (have you noticed its perfect shape, and the inroads the varying lines of green make on the leaf?) flushes out a smile to spring, so like a plain face illuminated with a great love, it is well worth a pilgrimage to see, and I think nothing could be lovelier. But when June comes with her sweet beauty, and kisses the green clover fronds and they blaze out blossoming, then I know God made nothing lovelier (save children and women only); and when the soft south wind dreams over the field and comes away with faint odors clinging to its garments, then I wonder God could think on so many sweet things to do. I wonder he has any beauty left to give to any field or flower; but he needs not to study parsimony as the poets do. He hath, and to him hath been given and he giveth

to the morning its light, and to the violet its blue, and to the golden-rod its gold, and to the whip-poor-will his dolorous cry, and to the rose its blushes, and to the stars their light; and after he has given to all he has not yet begun. He is the affluent God and his resources are past all possibility of exhaustion.

There is a patch of plum-trees fringing the edges of the cloverfield, thick-sown they are—God sowed them—and when spring is new, they are a tall pile of snow fresh fallen, only there blows from them an odor not of snowdrifts or winter, since snowdrifts are odorless; plum-sown drifts are odor-full. Sweet it is after long winter months, when woods and fields have all their odors sealed—for frozen fields are odorless—to walk over my hillfield and on a sudden have wafted in my face odors that might have been distilled for kings to use on coronation days, and feel myself in the path of the winds a-blowing from my drift of plum blossoms. My heart sings, “Spring is here! Spring is here!” And the meadowlark singing to the sun makes not more music than my heart, with its bird-call, “Spring is come, is come!”

Friend, I can see you *want* my farm; but I remind you of the commandment, “Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor’s” farm. Let us go down through the woods slowly. Make no haste, for woods are not made to pass through lightly. God has been a good while growing these trees and is not through yet. Walk down from the crest of the hill through the thickets where vines and briers tangle (get some nettles on your clothes—so—you look better), and pass that big elm, off with your hat, man; and now lift up your eyes—that is my orchard. Do you see long rows of apple trees? Why, I have come up through great tribulation to get them. Every one represents courage on my part, besides some trifling expense, and no end of forbearance. Those of mine own household have flouted me as a visionary and have looked knowingly at each other, as to say, “Poor dear, his reason was once as balanced as ours.” Genius is not understood, Columbus found it so; I have found it so. Great dreamers are always derided (see Palissy the potter, and Morse and Goodyear). Because I profess to see the day when, from those boughs apples shall hang their crimson spheres, even that person related to me, as Job’s wife was to him, has snubbed me publicly and held me up domestically to the ridicule of mine own children; but I persevered. Genius does. I have. Each year I planted a new installment of apples till now I have some thirty acres or over sown to them. I have sown the wind, but to this writing I have not reaped the whirlwind, nor even



ruddy,
luscious
scions
of the
house of apple.
What a day that
was! I can not for-
get it; and, to be plain
I have not tried to.
That was my day of
vindication. I was like
Job when his trouble
was over—I felt good. I felt
very good. "Apples! apples!"
I cried, instead of calling out
that ancient word (so archaic),
"Eureka!" That same day I picked
pears (not from the apple-trees), and
some late peaches (hard as biscuits new
wives bake). But providence has vindi-
cated me. Those who thought me mad (and
what is worse, told me and others what they
thought) are now humiliated, and I, to use the
psalmist's phrase, may stand by and say, "Aha!

a good Kansas breeze of apples.
I do not despair. "They also serve
who only stand and wait," says my
special friend, Milton. This being so,
I am a high-grade servant of the
apple crop. I stand and wait.
This fall I went through the
orchard, and (say it with
no haste, nor yet "trip-
pingly on the
tongue," but with
studied delibera-
tion, as a man
would kiss his
sweetheart),
I found
apples, big
and

aha!" This being the Scriptural method, I have done so. But I can advise an apple orchard. It is better than investing in mines. You never know what you will get by what you plant. A quartet of things or a double quartet of things may happen to the tree. It may freeze to death, or borers may probe it, or rabbits may girdle it, or your tenant may drive plow or wagon over it, or hot winds may bake it, or your neighbor's cattle may come uninvited into your field and eat it, or—but I desist. Enough has been said to show how delicious the uncertainty, such as is attendant on either fishing or mining. If the tree escapes all these snares of appleyouth it may come to applehood. This also is uncertain. This process is as thrilling as reading a serial story written by Mrs. Southworth. Aye, but it is bonnie! In winter, to look across the tops of apple-trees is to warm both eyes and hands; for the branches have a half-crimson, half-purple glow, so that after looking at them I feel as if I had warmed my hands and heart at a ruddy wood-blaze. And some morning you will walk into your field, and suddenly your spirit will sing, like happy music beside the conquering sea, when long rows of apple-trees are in early spring bloom—and the grass has had courage to grow green, and the brown fields in which the trees grow have hint of spring's coming; for the field will be pink as a winter-evening sky, and the apple-blossoms, with their dainty fragrance, and their exquisite form and delicacy of coloring make it so that resurrection seems not myth, but truth. An apple orchard is a success, you know, when the apple-trees bloom. They may not come to crop, what odds? They have done enough for one season. Let them bloom this year and bear next year. A man must not be covetous. When apple-branches flush with bloom heaven is no remote province, but nearer than "Down to old Aunt Mary's."

The pear-trees are beautiful specimens of arboreal life. The bark is shiny and dainty, and in color like unto dregs of wine, and smooth as polished hardwoods. God has taken pains with pear-trees. They grow tall and graceful as a woman, and, like a woman, are winsome. The blossoms are snow-white—why, the almond is not whiter, nor may-apple blossoms (than these, what could be more snow-white)? And the cherry-trees, their bark is smooth and polished, and blackberry and raspberry vines have rare crimsons to cross their tangle of branch and color over the little plot where they are sown. They are the ruddiest colors of the winter, save those which glow in the skies when daylight shames into the dusk. Peach-trees I love more in summer than in winter, for they

are a rotund tree, chunky, like a little body, and the peach leaf is a lance with which fairy warriors might wage war. So delicate in green and veining, and with such a tang to the taste as distinct as an olive's, the peach leaf is itself alone, and has no relations. The peach blooms early and has a roseate tint, and not many fruits are so beautiful as the peach, with its perfection of shade and many hues, varying from dim green to deep crimson. I am glad I planted peaches on this farm. My sagacity is something to wonder at. I knew my business, that is clear.



THE RAVINE

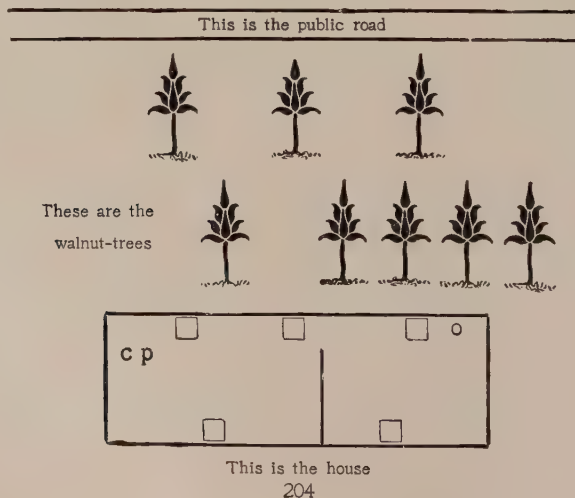
When apple branches stoop low beneath their burdens of delicious fruit (how sweet the odor of apples when you wander slowly through a laden orchard!), and when peach-trees, flush from their thicket of deep green leaves, their surprise of crimson fruit, and when, from their delicate stems leaning gracefully, the yellow pears, flushed with reds, hang in clusters, what farmer but must be proud of himself and be mindful of the sweet Providence that keeps orchard trees, unforgetful of what fruits each tree ought to bring to harvest; for I recall that every tree

remembers what fruit is expected of it, and that, though customary, is very, very strange. God made it so. How else?

Sauntering across the gentle slopes of my farm down in the croft (for I have gentle slopes sedate as middle age—not all the farm is a jump up and fall down) is a ravine, which spring rains have digged deep, until it is deep enough to hide a man on horseback, even if horse and man were Kentucky bred. A ravine, with trees growing in it and on its edge, is poetry if one knows enough to know poetry when it is written in prose form. This ravine lacks only one thing to make me love it to excess. As it is I love it quite enough to satisfy an exacting affection. The ravine lacks water, that is its omission which alone prevents it from perfection of beauty. But not to dwell on lacks, which would be a breach of courtesy, notice how knowingly the ravine jogs and zigzags, as if possessed of all the field; how it beats back on itself, as having forgotten something; how it makes spaces shut from winter winds, where birds find covert; here saplings and trees of sweet sixteen climb up the bank, or lean over the edges, or stand on the bank, as guarding a secret, or stand in the bottom of the ravine, like lads knee deep in summer streams. How the wild grapevine trails with its indescribable grace from tree to tree, and tosses out long tendrils to float to and fro with the incoming and outgoing tides of air! You shall see this ravine in the picture, and I take pride (albeit a religious pride) in calling attention to the fact that this ravine grows on my farm. If I can ever get money (the time seems strangely remote at this writing) I will dig a well and erect a windmill, and build a waterfall in this ravine, and plant cress along the watercourse, and have a lily pond at the far side where my ravine steps off my farm with hesitant step, as disinclined to go. In one thing I am inflexible with my hale friend, the renter, namely, that no limb be cut or broken from the trees, nor any briers be cut, nor any golden-rod dug from the banks of this ravine. And, withal, how the ravine thrives under my ownership. I am proud of its delight in my partiality. Each year the place grows in beauty and tangle of growth, as if eager to please me. Whether or not I am a success at raising corn and potatoes I can raise a fine ravine, which, to my mind, requires much more ability than the production of potatoes and corn.

Have you, my friend, have you the topography of my farm clearly in your mind? The hill-top where we saw the sea on the far south and the bewildering beauty of hills and orchard and harvest field and woods

and blue to the north, and on this hill the red clover pasture and the plum-trees and some gnarly oaks, then down hill through a fringe of woodland on the steep hill incline and then the cornfield and the orchard, and after that the rich soil through which the ravine digs its deep trench and grows its many pastorals and on the north-east corner some noble walnuts which shake their odorous fruits on the ground after the first keen frost bites into them, and under their shadows my house of two rooms is built. In the front room is the organ and in the back room the coffee pot; though I have scarcely stated the case with the accuracy such as marks my usual observations. Accurately stated there is no back room. Both are front rooms. I think highly of this architectural plan. The family lives in the front of the house, which gives an air of gentility and breeding not secured in the old architecture. The house is built lengthwise with the road, which plan does not necessitate the housewife leaving the meat to burn or the coffee to boil over while she runs to the front room to see who is going past in a buggy and what beau that Smith girl (the one who was sixteen ten years ago) has *now* —but she can keep on with the cooking and look out at the front window at the same time. It saves shoes and time and nerve force and muscles, and biscuits from burning. A grasping man would have patented this revolutionary idea in architecture and vended it as they do proprietary medicines. Not so I. In this open way I give my discovery to the world as physicians their remedies. The design of the house is as follows:



THE SPRING



Note (1) that the c p is an abbreviation for coffee pot and o is contraction for organ, and note (2) that both c p and o are located at front windows. Now that may not be genius, but I am inclined to think it is. Whether you are playing on the coffee pot or the organ, you can glance out and see the Smith girl with her city beau (sometimes beaux) pass and neither interrupt the aroma of the coffee nor the hilarity of the organ. With this lucid, brief, and yet comprehensive plan of my country house presented, I pass to other parts of my farm.

You will do well to come and take a drink out of my spring. I am always glad to get thirsty so as to take a drink at this fountain. It never has run dry. I keep the thicket growing here above the spring, with neither weed, nor vine, nor sapling, nor any tree cut; all the undergrowth and uppergrowth untouched, because I want dense shade for the spring to enjoy. This soggy damp is fitted for the growth of ferns (I have brought sandstone, and fern, and moss, and planted here), and the spring wells up quietly, no sputtering, as of a hen announcing that she has just laid an egg; but the water comes, not cold like mountain springs, to be sure, but cold enough to need no iceman, and requires no paying of ice bills. It is cold enough; and there, in plain sight, with the foliage reflected, leaf for leaf and spray for spray; and drinking water from a chalice like this is thirst-producing as well as thirst-satisfying; and I will come here to drink, whether I am thirsty or not. The birds drink here in welcome as the water drowzes from the spring down a little ravine and into my neighbor's woods. I let it. I am not stingy. What I can't keep I give away, which is the true art of generosity. Come and drink from this spring. What a farm this is!

In every play there is a villain. There is one on my farm. In y^e olden tyme a villain was a man who belonged to the soil—a digger in the ground—a vocation very honorable to this day and to all days. But this is not the sort of a villain I allude to. This is a live and vicious villain—a bold, bad man, who carries a gun and a kodak. When these two peculiarities combine in a man I set him down as the consummation of villainies. Which wickedness—the kodak wickedness or the gun wickedness—is the wickeder, I am not prepared to say. I do not here give my mind though I have settled opinions on the subject. This man has never shot me with his gun, but has often done so with his kodak, which is a breech-loader and always full of shells. This instrument of death has been turned on me when I have been playing baseball, when I made a base-hit, when I was making a home run, when I

sat down in the center-field and made my mark, to the great delight of the college boys, whose taskmaster I was; when I have been walking through the college campus with my Horace Greeley hat set jauntily on my intellectual forehead; when my shoulders have been stooped under life's onerous loads; when I have been going to the train with coat-tail horizontal and legs vainly beating the air; when I have been on this farm with my overalls on and hay-seed in my hair; when I have been talking to a lady with whom the head of our house had forbidden me to hold dialogue; and this villain has moreover sent the head of our house the picture (villain! villain!). In short, there is no time when he should not have kodaked me when he did not do it, and no time when he should have done so that he did so. The kodak microbe is a demoralizing microbe, in my observation, and makes for total depravity. The last wickedness this man was guilty of was putting the sun up to take my picture when I was in the mild act of appeasing my hunger at noon in the woods. This is the picture he took. When we (the other man and I) suggested that if a picture was to be thought of the villain should be in it, he said that much as he desired to be taken with us nothing could induce him to because he had to pull the trigger. He was the sportsman, we the game. This seemed candid. We (the victim and myself, both good men, he a banker and I a minister) suspected no lurking animosity. The villain looked pious (he always does; that is, he looks as if he was either at his devotions or going to them) and took the picture, but when the proofs were forthcoming gloated over us like Mr. Poe's raven on the pallid bust of Pallas, saying, "I would not be in the picture. Nothing would induce me. I am a temperance man;" and then, with Mephistophelian finger pointed to the water-cruise in the foreground, which, through his viciousness (the jug was his), was in our midst. "A Sunday-school superintendent," he said—for my friend the banker is a pious man on Sunday—"and a preacher and a jug—ha! ha! ha! ha! ha! ha! ha! ha! ha! ha! ha! ha! ha! ha! ha! ha!" Some people think there is no sin, and that wickedness is a piece of imagination. *They* do not know the villain or they would believe in sin and the father of it. I would not exonerate him from any evil design. Nothing will tempt me to put confidence in him. He is well connected, and is a man of brains, but neither ancestry nor culture avails in his behalf. He is undeniably wicked and refuses a work of grace, and will not attend a revival. He is a biologist, an ornithologist, an entomologist, and I would not put it past him to practice vivisection on me. I would not feel surprised if he

were to charge his kodak with chloroform and put me in a state of coma, so as to photograph my freckles. "Vigilance, eternal vigilance, is the price of liberty," said some old orator. That may be so, but I know that eternal vigilance is insufficient to guard me against this villain's depredations. Every gun is likely to kick its owner. Some



cameras are so. This camera kicked the villain. Here is the villain himself. He has been on my farm among my cornshocks, killing my rabbits and *quail*. He is caught red-handed. Though he wears after his name a learned title and browbeats students with threats of poor grades, that will avail him nothing now. He has paid no heed to my signs on my farm. One is "Do not watter stalk

has found him with my birds and beasts slung at his belt. My word for it but it shall go hard with



here." Another is "No shoting on this farm." He has paid no attention to either sign. His kodak has caught him "watter-ing his stalk," and

him ere he gets out of the grip of the law. He will rue having sided with Mrs. Mugwump against me, and having joined blithely in the witticisms at my expense. I will not be revengeful, but just. A neighbor has the sign, "This farm for sail." I do not have that because *this* farm is not in the market, but the signs I do have mean business, and the villain must find out signs mean what they say. "No lickin', no larn-in'," but I mean he shall not grow old (he is already grown up) ignorant. I will see that he "larns."



THE VILLAIN AND HIS FRIENDS

Then the villain is a hunter. He has no conscience I have seen

him shoot a jack-rabbit, and a hawk, and a squirrel, and when in the presence of these vicious capers have heard him laugh and say, "A good shot!" Will a man laugh at a funeral? This man will. He does. Hunting and kodaking demoralize the moral nature of man. The villain is old and bold. His conscience (allowing, as a matter of pure courtesy to him, that originally he had one) is atrophied. There is not even a vermiform appendage left. I have known him to shoot quails out of season. He thinks nothing of breaking the law. Once he inveigled me into carrying the game he had slain unlawfully as well as murderously. This I did as a matter of courtesy (for I am a Chesterfield in etiquette), for I was his guest (he driving me out after his red horses, two beasties about as big as two-year-old jack-rabbits), and I could not, with my code of manners, refuse mine host's request to skirmish around and pick up his game; but afterward it leaked out that he did this because the law holds that man guilty who has the ill-gotten game. Such perfidy I had read of, but scarcely believed. I thought Iago was an imaginary creation; now I know he is a photograph, and I could find Shakespeare a subject for a sitting.

Beyond this, the villain professes to like me, writes me postal cards, takes me riding, invites me to his home, drives me out when the purple aster is in bloom, comes to my hospitable board, drives me to my farm and says he enjoys it, praises my view, says it is "bully," caresses my trees (he *is* an Iago) loans me his red horses and red dog, glows over my ravine, says nice things about my hackberry and shell-bark hickory-trees, speaks in hopeful terms of my apple orchard, is sympathetic in my fondest aspirations of getting ten or fifteen dollars rent in the remote future, and even suggests I may some time get enough to pay a year's taxes; and I being of a confiding turn (interpreting others by myself) think him well-meaning and virtuous. But this man "who hath broken bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me" (quoted from the Psalter). When with Mrs. Mugwump, who holds my farm in slight esteem, he joins her hilarity at my expense; echoes her wickedest snigger; constructs poor jests about my farm and its achievements; joins in crude and unusual remarks about "chiggers;" laughs loudly at jests at my expense, refuses to look at me, being so engrossed with Mrs. Mugwump's humor and hospitality; thanks her for his dinner, whereas I paid for it and the black girl cooked it,—well he is a villain. That is all I can say now. Had I my way in my house (do I need to say I do not?) he would jest no more at me over my fried chicken.

The seasons all come to this farm. It is astonishing how far they come to enjoy this view. Birds from far-off woodlands bordering on the gulf come here and nest. I think highly of their taste. They know where to come. Thank goodness there are some creatures which, whatever the lack of the æsthetic on the part of the many, retain a fine Greek taste for the beautiful. The seasons all come here annually. I have never known them to miss. They are as regular as I am, and enjoy this farm with a gusto which is warming to my heart. Sometimes one season comes first, sometimes another. That depends entirely on what season you begin with. I begin with winter. Winter on this estate is a rare season. The land lies brown and beautiful. The many colors of a winter landscape are things not sufficiently attended to in popular thinking. People talk as if winter fields were uneventful and monotonous. Nothing is less true. Winter browns are quite as varied as summer greens. My woods stand black in winter, especially when the skies are gray with no hint of sunlight, the trees standing against such a sky look black as stormy water. Nature indulges in no black colors in vegetation save this. And I have seen my woods gloom against a winter evening sky like a rising storm-cloud. They are prodigal in this tempestuous quality. I love to look at it so, and can all but hear the mutter of the thunder which in summer booms intermittently from black thunder heads. And if you walk into the fields, the grasses are of varied hues. Some are light-toned, almost gray, some a deep russet, some species of slough grass are like browns touched with flame full of surprise and delight, and the wheat stubble keeps its old gold all the winter through, and corn stalks have the richness of color which minds the eye of a lion's skin brown as the desert he goes fleetly across; and golden-rod stands in the hedge-corners grouped in its miniature forests graceful in form as when they lean plumes of gold in autumn noons, but now the plumes are white like those which nod in a knight's helmet. This golden-rod flames out gold in autumn and snow in winter, and whether to love the more its gold or snow I know not. They belong to the two seasons and in either are radiant to my eyes. Weeds are brave winter folk. Flowers die in autumn, and even in the woods the bunches of violet leaves are pressed flat against the earth and have lost their green, or it is almost altogether blotted out, but weeds stand self-reliant nodding to the shivering winds. Winter weeds are prepared foods for the birds. They are their winter pasture fields. God is so thoughtful in leaving for his birds a spread table, standing high above the snow fall

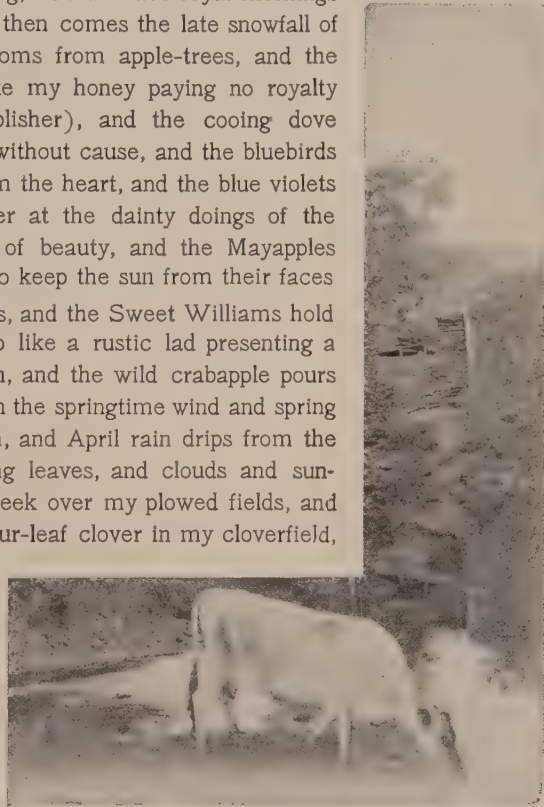
and drift, so that the birds shall breakfast at every hazard. The sunflower stands through the winter storms unintimidated and is gray in color like a winter's dusk when clouds are over all the sky, and the leaves in the woods are rusty as iron, and the red oak-trees keep their leaves, a kindly shelter for the houseless birds; and what a brave winter themselves made! I have been beneath them on winter days when the sun was bright and genial and when I walked without a shiver, but stepping beneath the oak-trees and closing my eyes and listening to the whetting of leaf against leaf, I began to shiver as with nipping cold. Winter leaves in the wind sound so wintry. Winter stays on this farm.

Then spring comes laughing like happy lovers. The earth smell is in the air, the frogs sing every night and very early in the spring from the ravines, the tenant plows the brown fields and turns them into black and the crow follows in the furrows, so do the blackbirds with their garrulous conversation; and the meadow lark, before a sprig of green is anywhere, tunes his voice to sing a spring poem, and I wonder if there is anything sweeter than a meadow lark's music floating over brown fields which have been mute in bird voices these months past. On my farm the meadow lark is the courier of the spring. Nobody is as welcome as he, with the splotches of yellow flecking his breast and his springy step as if he owns this meadow, and his constant tryst with the open field (he will have none of the forest) there he spills out his music, thence he whirrs his springy flight. Sometimes he will tilt a minute on a fence-post, but I do not recall seeing him on this farm in a hedge-row. There the golden thrush loves to live, but the meadow lark lives on the ground where we men and women walk. I would be pouting all the spring if he did not come. Contact with the earth gives him his gift of singing. He is a sweet son of the soil and dear to the heart as love. The blue jay is belligerent and garrulous, but he stays with me through the winter sometimes and comes very early in the spring, and I love his untuned voice as it cuts through the air like a sword swish. I give him warm welcome and am glad he is come. His morals I can not control; I have trouble enough with my own; but if he did not come to my woods I would be out of humor. The red bud gets the earliest color from the skies and wears it a trifle haughtily, being as I take it, a sort of vegetable aristocrat. The red buds have no beautiful curve like the elm, but stand angular as soldiers on guard. Though they think themselves aristocrats I will not quarrel with their self opinionation. They are here and they like my farm and are the earliest colors the woods wear.



THE CHAPLAIN OF MY FARM—JACK IN THE PULPIT

Therefore are they welcome. The elms have the earliest cloud of green bloom visiting my woods except the willow. Willows are first comers with their leaves. They come first, the elms follow, and later the buckeye and hickory and walnut and sycamore. Gooseberries leaf early and have a vivid green. The oak-trees are tardier than anybody. They are late sleepers. Even the blue jay's voice does not wake this drowsy sleeper, although it clings in his branches. Nobody but the sun can wake the oak. He is thick-skinned and impervious to hints. The sun must come and spill flame on his face or ever the oak-tree wakes, and long after all other trees are green the oak's brown leaves with a dogged tenacity hang to their year-long home till the new buds thrust them from their hold. Only new life will loose the grip of death; and when peach and cherry and apple and pear and blackberry take their turn at blooming, O! we have royal mornings on my farm. And then comes the late snowfall of falling petals of blooms from apple-trees, and the bees drone and take my honey paying no royalty (like a foreign publisher), and the cooing dove makes lamentation without cause, and the bluebirds chatter so as to warm the heart, and the blue violets make a man wonder at the dainty doings of the fingers of the God of beauty, and the Mayapples hold their parasols to keep the sun from their faces white as fresh snows, and the Sweet Williams hold their blue flowers up like a rustic lad presenting a nosegay to a woman, and the wild crabapple pours its delicious odors on the springtime wind and spring is come to my farm, and April rain drips from the eaves of the glowing leaves, and clouds and sunlight play hide-and-seek over my plowed fields, and young lovers hunt four-leaf clover in my cloverfield, and the birds woo and get married with never the intervention of justice or minister, and the frogs sing with melodious voices through the sweet



springtime night, and a hundred perfumes mix in the fields and woods by night—then my farm is an Eden meet for angels' visits.

Here summer comes and sweats with toil of growing cabbages, and peas, and lettuce, and pears, and onions (that perfumery for the humble), and cherries, and strawberries. Now stop. Strawberries? Why didn't you come, friend, when my strawberries were ripe? I had tame and wild ones, though for me I like wild ones better. But any will do. And when the tenant's cow gives cream instead of skimmed milk, and the strawberries are ripe and luscious—well, all I say is you had better happen around. And when summer gets down to hard work, and ripens the oats, and makes the corn grow so fast you can fairly see it grow if you stay half an hour, and turns wheatfields from green to gold, and makes my clover bloom, and has the sun work long hours and keep the stars out late o' nights if they want to shine a spell—then summer is bewildering.

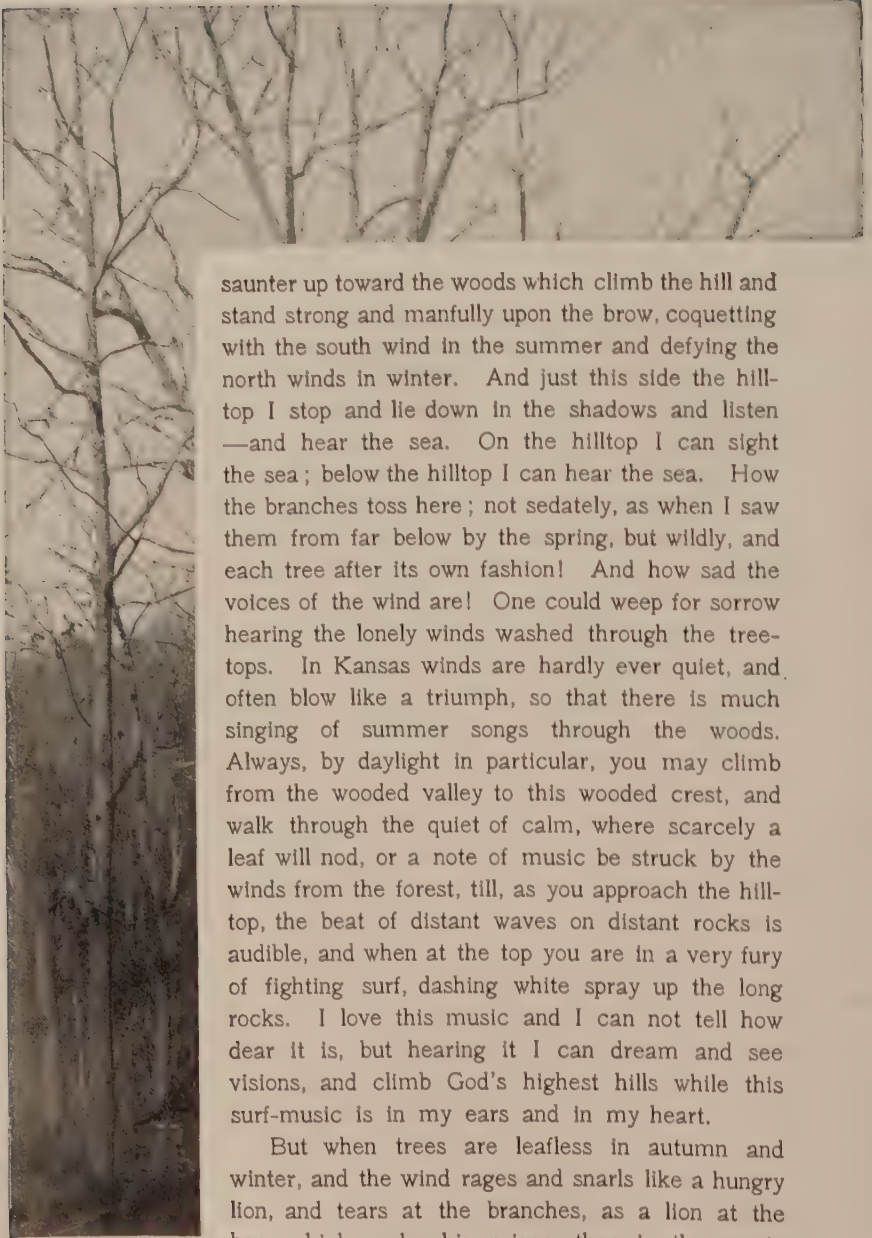
And in autumn my vineyard is worth a voyage across the ocean to get to see. The beautiful leaf delicately contrived of Him who invented beauty, throws its shadow on purple clusters with an earlier frost on them than gathers on the housetops in October. Then I forget whether grapes are utilitarian or artistic, whether they should be eaten or looked at and wondered at. I love to see their abundance of cluster and loveliness, and am glad to own this farm; and when the leaves begin to weary of fluttering to the winds and fall through sheer idleness, and the elms grow yellow, and willow leaves have a jaundice look, and the ivies are glorious as skies of sunset, and every tree trunk they engirdle is ruby, as if it were not tree, but gem, and the maples blush and hang out scarlet banners, and oaks are gorgeous, and when the leaves rustle under your feet,—then I wish fall lasted twelve months. To kick around over your own leaves is to taste bliss; and I am haughty to own a farm. Winter, spring, summer and fall come here to enjoy themselves, and they are very welcome.

In summer, when I lie, surcharged with indolence, down by my spring in the shadows, with the water standing in pools, and catching leaf and sky and cloud in its mirror, and holding them up like signals to the clouds sailing over my farm, life grows glad. We are a hospitable lot, the farm and the spring and I, and, like Abraham at his tent door, hail all who go along our way to stop and be sociable (all except the assessor. Not the farm, nor the spring, nor the ravine, nor the corn growing in rows or standing in shock, none of us nor all of



TALL TREES RIM THE CREST

us like the assessor. He invades our quiet and disturbs our receipts, and reminds us we are not in Arcadia, which, prior to his coming, was our settled belief). And while I lie in the shade beside my spring on the north line of my estate and on the lowest levels my farm reaches, it is sweet to half drowse, half wake in the quiet while the wooded hills high above shut out all boisterousness of wind, so that here truly summer quiet lies. The day dreams. It is noon. A crow intermittently and lazily calls his "caw, caw," but the birds seem tired out, and a quiet and languid breeze is all that puffs summer perfumes in my face. And the slow clouds float by like icebergs seen afar, but by and by even the clouds fall wholly asleep. Watching them through the leaves they affect me as having forgotten action long ago, or push lazily forward, like a drifting boat, and then sink back into slumber again. But the oatfield on the farm running up the hill's slope to the woods, nods its thousands heads so sagaciously, as if to say, "No doubt, no doubt, that is the truth of it." And upon the hill, where the tall trees rim the crest, how solemnly the trees toss to the wind! If one were under their shadows there would be laughter in the leaves and the sunlight sifting through, but thus far removed there is neither sunlight nor music, only the solemn waving to and fro of plumes, looking strangely dark against the sky of utter blue. In this accord of motion seen afar is something exceeding remote, as if from some far headland jutting out into the spiritual sea, dim companies were signaling us in stately and rhythmic fashion. In the far off elm-trees is the wind that does not blow on me, nor draw near my green hollow lying in the shadow; and looking from afar thus seeming like a boat with oars that dip and lift, out on water against the sky when you hear no drip of water from the lifted oar, nor dip of oar touching the water again, nor any lap of water against the keel. Thus I love the quiet of this croft, where the spring is better than wine for my thirsty lips; but I leave it and



saunter up toward the woods which climb the hill and stand strong and manfully upon the brow, coquetting with the south wind in the summer and defying the north winds in winter. And just this side the hilltop I stop and lie down in the shadows and listen—and hear the sea. On the hilltop I can sight the sea; below the hilltop I can hear the sea. How the branches toss here; not sedately, as when I saw them from far below by the spring, but wildly, and each tree after its own fashion! And how sad the voices of the wind are! One could weep for sorrow hearing the lonely winds washed through the tree-tops. In Kansas winds are hardly ever quiet, and often blow like a triumph, so that there is much singing of summer songs through the woods. Always, by daylight in particular, you may climb from the wooded valley to this wooded crest, and walk through the quiet of calm, where scarcely a leaf will nod, or a note of music be struck by the winds from the forest, till, as you approach the hilltop, the beat of distant waves on distant rocks is audible, and when at the top you are in a very fury of fighting surf, dashing white spray up the long rocks. I love this music and I can not tell how dear it is, but hearing it I can dream and see visions, and climb God's highest hills while this surf-music is in my ears and in my heart.

But when trees are leafless in autumn and winter, and the wind rages and snarls like a hungry lion, and tears at the branches, as a lion at the bars which make his prison, then is the music

frightful, but sublime. Then, when the woeful surges rush through the trees, as I have seen ocean surges rush at high tides, with stormwinds behind them over snags of teeth of ocean rocks, where bravest ships of knit steel would have been laughingstocks to those furious waters—when such winds blow their tiger lungs I cease dreaming and leap to battle. I come to be imperious, as if I were Napoleon. My courage defies impossibility. I could climb Alps or break pyramids down, or leap from sea cliffs down into the boiling ocean in sheer luxury. Nothing daunts me. My spirit clamors with the storm. The giant branches twist and combat, like a cyclops caught in battle in the clammy arms of an octopus, and the wind blows battle charges, and all the storm drives like cavalrymen going into the fight. Then the music is something to be remembered for a century. Give me not always calm, with its hushed quiet, but the clamor of the riotous winds, when nature is fighting nature in frightful combat, and when neither combatant will yield.

Friend, most things are on this farm. To own a winter tempest in the treetops and its tremendous music, what think you of that? I call that riches. I own acres of soil and sunshine, and winter and spring and October, but besides I own acres of angry wind, and furious onset, and a Niagara of organ music. How rich I am owning this farm!

A wild crab stands on the hill where years ago they quarried stones for a college hard by. The quarry is now overgrown, a reminiscence. I am glad it is so, for I like its dishevelment, feeling its way back to nature. A huge thorn-tree stands on the quarry's edge, and in the quarry are thickets of roses where birds nest in the sweet summer; and leaves in autumn gather in the disused quarry as in a pool where waters had drifted them, and in the quarry stands the wild crab. There it stands quite alone, but never lonely. In winter, its brawn of brazen muscle sneers at the tempests and looks rigid as death. No hint at smiling. I would as lief think a brazen pillar would bloom as to think this wild crab would flash into flower. Howbeit, when spring is come and sets up housekeeping, this crab lights a lamp like the pleasant flame of an evening sky, not crimson, but a gentle flame a man might warm him by, but would never burn his hands. This is a spring fire—this crab in bloom. How I love its tender twilight of crimson! I warm my eyes here and my heart; for hearts need warming as hands do on a chilly morning. And then, saturating the air like the perfume of a fair woman's garments as she comes to meet her lover, is a whiff of this

aromatic flame. I did not know when I bought this farm that it grew spices, but it does. This is my spice grove which I will not exchange for sandalwood. Who could have thought in the bare winter that this crab-tree was an alabaster box holding precious ointment? I never dreamed it. How could I? But now, when spring has come like fair Mary, lover of the Christ, and has broken the alabaster box, lo! the air is faint with fragrance as if Christ were here and the sacred odors laved his sacred feet. And were he here, he would say in gentle voice, "Whence brought you this ointment, *very* precious? I have not known its like for fragrance." Friend, come to my farm when my spice grove of one wild crab-tree is in bloom and you will grow glad as a happy child.

And then I have a whip-poor-will in my woods in the moonlight. A nightingale is not an American singer. He certainly is not a Kansas singer. He is not on my farm; but I am not regretful. I have the meadow lark on my brown fields, and his note is sweet enough to make a heart long for springtime just to hear his lute voice once. Yonder where the woods stand black against the hill and moonlight makes all the sky radiant, and dim distances are enchanting, and heaven seems to have settled down about my farm for the night, and the owl hoots with a leer in his voice, and the screech owl makes his pitiful complaint, then all of a sudden my whip-poor-will sets a-singing. A flute is not clearer. He is not a player of wide range of theme or tune, but has one he seems to love, and as I take it, having listened to him often (how often? no matter, not often enough), a song his beloved is fond of, for when once he blows its sweet staccatos and all of them, not one note omitted, and stops, I think I have heard his lady for whom he made the music say, "Sing it once more, beloved, I love that love song so;" and so like any lover, obedient to his beloved, he tunes the instrument and sings his love song once again. If his lady is as I am, he will sing it night by night, nor ever grow weary. The whip-poor-will's voice fits the moonlight and the starlight and the dusk and the dense darkness. O, but the notes are "rainy sweet." I will ask my friend Harry D. Cornwell to say his say about our common friend the whip-poor-will. Friend Cornwell, have your say:

*"When apple-branches, flushed with bloom,
Load June's warm evenings with perfume,
And balmier grows each perfect day,
And fields are sweet with new-mown hay,
Then, minstrel lone, I hear thy note,
Up from the pasture-thickets float—
Whip-poor-will!"*

MY WILD ROSE THICKET



*Thine are the hours to love endeared,
And summoned by thy accents weird,
What wild regrets—what tender pain,
Recall my youthful dreams again,
As floating down the shadowy years,
That old refrain fond memory hears—
Whip-poor-will!*

*The garish day inspires thee not;
But hid in some deep-shaded grot,
Thou like a sad recluse dost wait
The silver hours inviolate.
When every harsher sound is flown,
And groves and glen are thine alone,
Whip-poor-will.*

*Then, when the rapt, voluptuous night
Pants in the young moon's tender light,
And wood, and cliffs, and shimmering streams
Are splendid in her argent beams—
How thrills the lover's heart to hear
Thy loud staccato, liquid-clear,
Whip-poor-will.*

*Whence comes the iterated phrase,
That to the wondering ear conveys
Half-human sounds, yet cheats the sense
With vagueness of intelligence,
And, like a wandering voice of air,
Haunts the dim fields, we know not where?
Whip-poor-will.*

Now while the white moonlight fills all the void 'twixt me and heaven, and all the trees are flung upon the grass in lifelike silhouettes, and a gentle wind mixes with the starlight and moonlight going through the trees caressingly like a lover's whisper, and the whip-poor-will flutes his tearful note so that the valley hears him from the hilltops, while the birds in their nests are so asleep they hear not these notes of his wooing, while this radiant mood lies on my spirit like heaven's exceeding calm, I think I will say, "Good-night, God keep you, good-night;" and I will pull my cloak about me and lie down on this mosaic of moonlight and shadow, and with my prayer haling toward God through the long moonlit reaches (for no prayer misses its way, not one, thank God for that, my heart), I will lie down and go to sleep; and so I will say good-night.

GLOAMING





GLOAMING

GLOAMING



C HILD, go and pray—for see! the night is here!
Through cloudy rifts the golden lights appear;
The hills faint outline trembles in the mist;
Scarce is heard a distant chariot—list!
The world's at rest; the tree beside the way
Gives to the evening wind the dust of day.

Twilight unlocks the hiding-place of stars;
They gleam and glow behind night's shadowy bars.
The fringe of carmine narrows in the west,
The moonlight water lies in shining rest;
Furrow and foot path melt and disappear;
The anxious traveler doubts the far and near.

—VICTOR HUGO.

Gloaming is day's aftermath. When the labor of the light is ended, when our work lies behind us like a plain crossed in journeying toward high hills, there is a borderland sweet as dreams lying dim between day and dark. This is the gloaming. It is day's respite from itself, when what we are is merging into what we are to be; when the world seems far removed, as waves beating on a distant shore; when, as in a neutral territory, we belong neither to to-day nor to to-morrow, but in a certain high regard belong to ourselves alone, and thus sit solitary.

Gloaming is the time of glooming, gloam and gloom being forms of one word; and so understood, how full is the descriptive energy of the name for what it pictures! Not day nor night, nor light nor blackness, but this, light gloaming into lampless darkness. Gloom sifting through the skies like powdered smoke, until the world is changed, and the one word on the gloaming's lips is, "Toil, take rest."

And this gray gloaming is a time of rest for the spirit. The glory of the sunset fades. Light retreats like a vanquished army. Gray quiet falls on land and sky. An unseen angel whispers, "Peace."

Now is the time for folding the hands—time to rest—and rest is sweet when rest is needed. Now is the time to watch the day dim and the night darken, until, at the end, you, who began your dreamings in the day, find you end them in the night.

For years I have planned to spend this too-brief gloaming alone, not thinking, but letting thoughts drift over me like summer clouds, which drop their passing shadows on the field and stream. This is my hour to banish care; to leave the hush of prayer on the spirit and let God walk silent in the heart, as in a garden.

"To wander lonely as a cloud,"

as Wordsworth phrases it. If I may, in the open, with the neighborly sky and the companionable stars, and hear the moan of winter winds through naked trees, or feel the touch of summer's lips; or, if I may not be Out-of-Doors, to be Out-of-Doors in spirit and watch, as I sit in my study before the lights are lit, the droop of ashen hues into the sky, and the shadow these ashen tints cast across our spirit.

*Floating, floating, from dawn to dusk,
Till the pearly twilight dies,
And the mists float up from the sapphire sea
And cloud all the sapphire skies.
Floating, floating, while golden stars
Seem to float in a sea overhead,
And starry lights from a sea below
Glow orange, and purple, and red;
Till we seem floating out from the sea of life,
The tempests of passion, the stormwinds of strife,
Out into a strange, mysterious space,
Till God shall find us a landing-place.*

*Drifting, drifting, to lands unknown,
From a world of love and care,
Drifting away to a home untried
And a heart that is waiting there.
O ship! sail swiftly—O waters deep!
Bear me safe to that haven unknown—
Safe to that tender love that waits
To be forever my own;
Till we drift away from the sea of life,
The tempests of passion, the stormwinds of strife,
Out to a haven, out to a shore
Where life is love for evermore.*

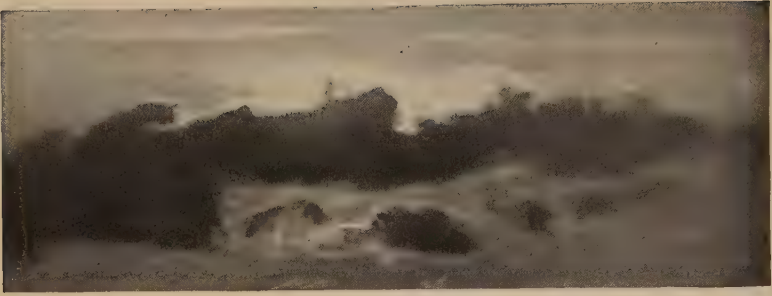
—GOOD WORDS.

*The day dies slowly in the western sky,
The sunset splendor fades, and wan and cold
The far peaks wait the sunrise; cheerily
The goatherd calls his wanderers to their fold;
My weary soul, that fain would cease to roam,
Take comfort; evening bringeth all things home.
Homeward the swift-winged seagull takes its flight;
The ebbing tide breaks softly on the sand;
The red-sailed boats draw shoreward for the night;
The shadows deepen over sea and land;
Be still, my soul; thine hour shall also come;
Behold, one evening God shall lead thee home.*

—LIVING AGE.

Ah me, heart! thank God for the gloaming; and may there be a gloaming somewhere in heaven for those who want it!





GOOD-NIGHT

The day is done; *and in the morning's east*
The shadows lie, *dim dreams of night.*
The time is past for labor; *and released,*
Like galley slaves *let loose in fight*
On seas that rock with battle shock, *spent strength*
Turns face and step with love, *homeward at length.*

The night has come; *and with the evening star*
Day's pain drifts back like ebbing tide;
And blessed moonlight ripples o'er the bar
Of twilight. Then, Love glorified,
Our God's good angel, sings, *voice sweet and deep;*
And with the ebbing music cometh sleep.



